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The Jewish Historico-  
Critical School of the  
19<sup>th</sup> Century

University of Michigan.





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# **The Jewish Historico-Critical School of the Nineteenth Century**

BY

**NATHAN STERN, A.M.**

*SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
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## VITA

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THE author was born February 12, 1878, in New York. He attended the Public Grammar School No. 32 in that city, Halsey's Collegiate School, and Columbia College, from which he was graduated in 1898 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In 1899 he received the degree of Master of Arts from Columbia University.

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THE  
JEWISH HISTORICO-CRITICAL SCHOOL  
OF THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE period including the second half of the eighteenth century and the whole of the nineteenth may be characterized as one of protest and revolution. There prevailed generally a yearning for freedom from institutions that held the intellect captive. This yearning was experienced by the Jew. Having had practically no share in the outer world, he devoted all his energy to the development of his religious life and his Talmudism. The claims of scientific truth were ignored by the Rabbis; and research was forbidden by them.

The Protestant Reformation was a revolt against ignorance and the tyranny of the Church. What may be termed "the Jewish Reformation," heralded by Moses Mendelssohn (1728-1786), was a reaction against medieval survivals within the Jewish body, and a protest against the sway that the Jewish faith, in the form of Cabala and Rabbinism, had exercised over the minds of its adherents. As within Christendom the Protestant Reformation promoted the study of the sciences and the encouragement of investigation generally, so throughout Judaism the Jewish Reformation ultimately produced similar results.

Mendelssohn and his contemporaries paid little attention to the critical study of Jewish history and literature; but, by cultivating the tastes of the Jew, by introducing him to modern culture, by

acquainting him with the simple instead of the casuistic interpretation of the Scriptures, by the reorganization of the Jewish schools, and by taking the first steps toward the emancipation of the Jew in Germany, they paved the way for its introduction, about the second decade of the nineteenth century.

Economic and social conditions during this period were favorable to the new method of inquiry. During the Middle Ages the Jew found no home. He belonged to the state, but was not part of it. Injury was inflicted upon him with impunity. As the times became more settled, and commerce engrossed the attention of the nations, Hebrews were granted a wider toleration. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Jews had already taken an important position in the commercial life of the people among whom they dwelt. Being a very active race, they had readily adapted themselves to existing conditions. Some had found their place in the ranks of labor; others, more enterprising or ambitious, had risen high and made their influence felt in the social and economic worlds; while some had even been the recipients of royal or imperial honors. In America social and political equality had been accorded to the Hebrew; while in Europe the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, by abolishing the old conditions, were preparing the way for similar privileges. In the short-lived kingdom of Westphalia, over which Jerome, brother of Napoleon Bonaparte, reigned, the Jew was given in 1808 freedom and equality of rights.

The impress that these tumultuous times left on civilization in general and on Europe in particular was manifested in the widening of social concepts. With the passing away of the old conditions the Jew rose socially. He could no longer be considered a chattel of the state, but was regarded as part of the social constitution. This change in social conditions brought about an increase of attention on the part of governments to the education of the Jew. At first, special schools were erected for him. Later, the same school-room was used simultaneously by Jewish and Christian children, with, however, separate benches for the former. Ultimately this distinction was abolished, and school, gymnasium, and university were thrown open to all, irrespective of religion.

In the school and in the university the Jew was brought in contact with new studies and new influences. The history and literature

of other peoples were systematically taught, with the result that the Jew began to bring system into the study of his own, which the scientific spirit of the age had not yet reached. A comparison of what he learned in the schools with what he had been taught at the synagogue made him skeptical of his tradition; for in many instances this tradition did not harmonize with the new learning. The problems, What shall be and what shall not be studied? What is and what is not sacred? What is and what is not true? were considered in a new light; resulting in a complete revolution of the conception of the past, and in a thorough and an effectual reaction against Cabala, Hasidism, and Rabbinism.

It may rightly be claimed, however, that though admission to the universities stimulated the pursuit of knowledge among the Jews in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century, and among Jews generally in the second half, the conditions in Austria were not such as to warrant the assertion that university life was an important factor in the inception of methodical Jewish study in Galicia. Though public schools were erected for the instruction of Jewish children, they were looked upon with suspicion. On the whole, the Galician Jew preferred to pay the tax, imposed upon all who refused to send their children to such schools, rather than to have his children instructed in the secular sciences. It was owing to these conditions that Nachman Krochmal (1785-1840) and Solomon Judah Rapoport (1790-1867), the earliest and, perhaps, the greatest of the Galician students, had to pursue their secular studies under many difficulties. They were what the Germans style "autodidacten," and never attended either public school or university.

To have produced such men as these, there must have existed another element besides admission to the higher seats of learning: this element is to be sought for only within the Synagogue itself. That there was, indeed, some inherent quality in Judaism, which, developing slowly by reason of obstruction due to ignorance and mysticism, was bound, under favorable conditions, to assert itself, is evident from the case of Elijah Wilna (1720-1797). Living in Poland, surrounded for the most part by fanatics, removed from all contact with a highly cultured society, Elijah strove to effect a change in the intellectual condition of those about him, and to this end exhorted them to apply themselves to the study of the secular sci-

ences. The impulse that actuated Elijah could only have emanated from within Judaism; and it was the same force that impelled Krochmal and Rapoport to the prosecution of their studies.

Briefly, the agencies of the renaissance of Jewish learning may be summarized as follows: Economic conditions had everywhere altered. These changes in the economic world had been followed by corresponding changes in the political and social conditions of the European nations and of the Jews. These in turn affected the intellectual status of the Jew, which resulted in a systematic study by him of his past. This study was favored by a slow development within Judaism itself, and by the admission of Jews into the schools and universities. In short, the same *Zeitgeist* that was tending toward the emancipation and social equality of the Jew was impelling him to study his past and to study it scientifically.

The field to be worked was very extensive, and difficult as well. Jewish literature—understanding thereby not only compositions of literary value, but all writings on Jewish subjects, whether in Hebrew or in other languages—had been very prolific. During the persecutions of the Middle Ages many literary documents and historical sources had been destroyed, or lost, or had been hidden in libraries, so that their existence was not known. The difficulty lay not in the want of material, but in the uncertainty with regard to the means of rediscovering what had been lost. With the revival of Jewish learning, the libraries throughout Europe were ransacked in search of manuscripts that might assist the student in his investigations; and constant correspondence having a similar aim passed between Jewish scholars of the North and the South, of the East and the West.

The greatest need was felt in the department of history; for the sources upon which scholars might base their studies were comparatively few. So sparse indeed were the historical data, that Zunz found it necessary to begin his "Literaturgeschichte" with these words: "We must not be surprised if the Jewish Middle Ages can boast of no historian. A nation *in partibus* performs no feat: her sufferings may produce chroniclers and poets, but no historian. Scientific faculty, yea even the necessity thereof, was wanting for historical investigation." For the student of Jewish history these data were like oases in an extensive desert. They were not histories

in the general sense of the word, but annals; and their contents were often inaccurate or mere strings of names and dates. Some of them were interwoven with fiction; and their chronology was frequently adjusted to fit some preconceived scheme. Since the time of Josephus, no really authoritative history of the Jews had been composed.

Such were the foundations upon which the student of history had to build. His work was by no means easy. He had to proceed cautiously in order to find the facts; to remove the accretions that had hidden the truth during many years of exile. Such removal required great astuteness and critical insight. Men were not lacking, however, who by a thorough training were qualified to discriminate between the real and the unreal, to separate the true from the false. This was the work of the modern school of critics. Though a study of history was, perhaps, the main interest of this school, it was not the only one: it reviewed what had been done in all the departments of Jewish learning.

This activity, once manifested, spread rapidly. Volume after volume appeared. Among the more favorite means of publishing the results of study, especially the working out of details, were the periodicals. At first these were few; but to-day there are numerous journals and reviews devoted wholly to the presentation of the results of Jewish study. This activity has displayed itself in other forms. There are now many societies whose object is the study of Jewish history. Of these the best work has been done by the Commission für Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, the Société des Études Juives (Paris), the American Jewish Historical Society, and the Historical Society of England.

The present dissertation does not pretend to be an exhaustive study of the work of the modern critical school. In a complete account, many other illustrious names—Munk, Dukes, Sachs, Löw, I. H. Weiss, Jellinek, Cassel, and Kaufmann, for example—would have been included. An attempt has here been made merely to sketch the lives and to present a brief analysis of the works of the foremost scholars and authors in three branches of this school—the Galician, the Italian, and the German.

Of the Galician branch Krochmal and Rapoport were by far the most important. They were the pioneers. Their work was the incentive for the entire critical school; their method of criticism, the



study of their successors. Isaac Samuel Reggio (1784–1855) and Samuel David Luzzatto (1800–1865) are the representatives of the Italian branch. Having come into closer contact with the results of the Italian Renaissance, they studied the art of presentation, and purified modern Hebrew style. This style added to the weight of their historical and critical studies. Of the three branches, the German has been the most productive and the most far-reaching in its results. Its leaders were Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), Zacharias Frankel (1801–1875), Isaac Marcus Jost (1793–1860), Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891), and Moritz Steinschneider (born 1816). By their works, written for the most part in German, Jewish learning has been made accessible to all; and for this reason the work of the German branch is more generally known.

Through the steadfastness with which these scholars have applied themselves to their tasks, and the thoroughness of their study, allied to their indefatigable zeal in investigation, their astute analyses, and their scientific inductions, the history of Israel has been presented to the world in a manner worthy of profound consideration.

## CHAPTER II

### NACHMAN KROCHMAL

NACHMAN KROCHMAL,<sup>1</sup> Biblical critic, historian, and philosopher, was born February 17, 1785, in Brody, Galicia. His father, a merchant of ample fortune, in the course of his travels to Berlin and Leipzig, had met Mendelssohn and David Friedlander, and, being greatly impressed by them, resolved to give his son a thorough education. The education of a Jew in the Galicia of his day was confined to a study of the Bible and the Talmud. In this study Krochmal excelled all his companions in the rapidity with which he grasped the subject.

In his fourteenth year he was married to a Miss Haberman, of Zolkiev, and went to live with his father-in-law. This change of residence was beneficial to Krochmal, as it hastened the maturity of his mental faculties and broadened his intellectual horizon. In Zolkiev he had at his disposal the library of Hirsch New,<sup>2</sup> a district

<sup>1</sup> The family name was originally "Krochmalniq" and was later shortened by Nachman (ZUNZ, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 150).

<sup>2</sup> LETTERIS, Introduction to the *Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman*, 1863, p. 15.

teacher, who was far in advance of his environment. Alone Krochmal studied Arabic, Syriac, Latin, German, French, mathematics, and the natural sciences. Philosophy was his favorite study. Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Spinoza, Lessing, and Mendelssohn were his favorite authors. Kant controlled the views of his early years, but soon yielded place to Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel, each of whom in turn dominated his thought. Notwithstanding the variety of the subjects studied, he never ceased to perfect his knowledge in the Law and in Hebrew literature.

Excessive study and neglect of his own personal comfort so weakened Krochmal that he never fully recovered from their effects. The *Hasidim* ("pious ones") said: "The demons have hold of him; an evil spirit which will never leave him terrifies him; his affliction is due to too intimate an acquaintance with idolatrous books. Hence he goes about in the shadow of death; and the image of God has left him."<sup>1</sup> But Krochmal refused to yield to physical weakness, which he regarded as a divine dispensation. After each successive attack had spent its force, he arose more determined than ever to accomplish his task. He dreaded the onslaughts of mystic fanatics considerably more than bodily ailment. Despite much opposition, he devoted a great portion of his time to the instruction of the young. His reputation increased; and there gathered about him the more ambitious of the Galician students. To all he gave instruction and counsel in the branches in which they were particularly interested; for he was a man of versatile genius.

After the death of his mother-in-law, in 1814, he was compelled to work in order to support himself and his family. He refused to enter the ministry. Perhaps his ill health forbade him; perhaps also he recognized that a position in the synagogue was not in keeping with his views. He wished to give no provocation for strife, preferring want to contention.<sup>2</sup> "My health has failed," he wrote.<sup>3</sup> "Evil has passed over my head these last few years. Not long since my wife, after a lingering illness, passed away [1826]. . . . Deserted, I remain here alone with my youngest child, a lad of ten. My eyes

<sup>1</sup> LETTERIS, *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> ZUNZ, *ibid.*, pp. 156, 158; LETTERIS, *ibid.*, p. 23, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Letter ii. p. 55, appended to *Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman*; *Kerem Hemed*, ii. 109.

lift themselves to heaven; whence shall come my help?" His remaining strength soon gave way, and he was compelled to seek shelter with his daughter in Tarnopol. Here the wise men gathered around him: he was their leader; his home, their meeting-place. He died on July 31, 1840, and was followed to the grave by most of the Jewish population of the city.

Owing to excessive humility, to bodily infirmity (which, as it increased in force, rendered intellectual labor more arduous), to financial straits, and to the attacks of fanatics, Krochmal wrote but little. He seems to have been contented to teach and to depart from life without leaving any token of his greatness other than the love embedded in the hearts of his pupils. He was continually rebuked for his avoidance of public notice; and one of his admirers called<sup>1</sup> to him: "Lo, thou art great; great things has thy soul discovered! Shouldest thou be wise for thyself alone? Did not God send thee here to give light to others?" Incessant exhortations ultimately had the effect of inducing him to put in writing some of his thoughts.<sup>2</sup>

Krochmal's first articles were contributed to the periodical "*Kerem Hemed*,"<sup>3</sup> and fully confirmed the reports of his scholarship.<sup>4</sup> After their appearance, the wise man maintained a stubborn silence. On his death-bed, he reluctantly produced a manuscript which was to be published only if Zunz would consent to read, arrange, and edit the same.<sup>5</sup> This manuscript was the product of a life's work. Krochmal had no fixed time for study or composition. He wrote spasmodically; now on one theme, now on another.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, he was very irregular in his work, beginning many chapters at one and the same time.<sup>7</sup> No one chapter is complete; and many which he had planned were never written, death preventing their completion. The editing of such a manuscript was a difficult task; but Zunz was equal to it. He prepared the work for the printer, and published it (1851), eleven years after the death of the author.

<sup>1</sup> *Kerem Hemed*, i. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 491.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 260, v. 51, which later found their place in the *Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman*. Krochmal also contributed to the *Sulamith* (1818) and to the *Zefira* (Zolkiev, 1824).

<sup>4</sup> I. H. Weiss, *Zikronotai*, p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> This manuscript represents all of Krochmal's work. After his death a careful search was made; but no other manuscript was to be found.

<sup>6</sup> Weiss, *ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>7</sup> Zunz, Introduction to the *Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman* 1863, p. 5.

Krochmal's purpose in writing his work may be summed up in his own words: "If to any of my readers our taste appear trifling—and, perhaps, he may regard all our words as the ravings of a dream, because they are not in accordance with the language, the style, and the form with which he has been acquainted since his youth,—behold, his is the power [to accept or reject]. Let him not charge the author with guilt, nor suspect him [of evil intent], thereby repaying good with evil. Our aim, especially in chapters xiii. and xiv., was to shed honor on our wise men, to glorify their names and memory, and to make peace between the two laws,<sup>1</sup> to lay bare the root and origin of those words against which other nations plead and at which the frivolous of our congregation mock."<sup>2</sup> Krochmal hoped to counteract the effect of folly and fanaticism on Jewish learning, to make known the events of history as they befell Israel, to trace the origin of the law (Halakah), to characterize the Midrashic literature, to discuss the beginnings of Jewish philosophy, to present the ideas of Jewish philosophers, and to comment upon them; in short, to effect a synthesis between Jewish theology and Jewish philosophy, on the one hand, and the principles of Ibn Ezra and of Maimonides, modified by those of Hegel, on the other. In his historical research the work of Azariah dei Rossi<sup>3</sup> served as model.<sup>4</sup>

Krochmal desired his work to be called "*Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman*" (Guide of the Perplexed of the Time). It was intended to be a hand-book for present needs, as Maimonides' "*Moreh Nebukim*" (Guide of the Perplexed) had been in the Middle Ages. The work is divided into seventeen chapters,<sup>5</sup> of which the first six are introductory. The author discountenances superstition, fanaticism, hypocrisy, materialism, skepticism, degeneracy, and the belief that salvation may be attained through deeds of piety. Salvation can be obtained only in the Golden Mean. Having defined Aristotle's defini-

<sup>1</sup> The oral and the written laws.

<sup>2</sup> *Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman*, 2d ed., p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> AZARIAH DEI ROSSI (1514–1578), author of the *Me'or 'Enayim*, was the precursor of the modern Jewish critical school. ZUNZ's life of Dei Rossi, in *Keren Hemed*, iv. 148.

<sup>4</sup> ZUNZ, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 156.

<sup>5</sup> Compare ZUNZ's introduction to the *Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman*, and S. SCHRECHTER's paper on *Rabbi Nachman Krochmal*, read before the Jews' College Literary Society, London, 1887, and reprinted in his *Studies in Judaism*, Philadelphia, 1896.

tion of "the good" or Golden Mean, and having discussed at some length those arguments that are advanced by the various philosophical systems with the view of tracing all phenomena to a primary cause, and of proving the existence of a God, Krochmal passes to chapter vii., in which the subject proper is introduced. The ancient history of Israel, whose religion was monotheistic, is compared with the history of other ancient but idolatrous peoples. Like all other nations, Israel has developed in accordance with the natural laws of growth, maturity, and decay, and has even passed through several cycles of such a development.

The first cycle, according to Krochmal, runs thus: Growth, from the beginning of Israel's existence to the entrance into Palestine; maturity, from the entrance into Palestine to the death of Solomon; decay, from the death of Solomon to the murder of Gedoliah (ch. viii.).

The second cycle runs: Growth, from the beginning of the Babylonian exile till the time of Alexander of Macedon (ch. ix.); maturity, from Alexander the Great to the quarrel between the two sons of Alexander Jannæus, which period is noteworthy for having produced the Great Synagogue, the three great sects, and the Apocrypha; decay, from that time till the fall of Bethar and the completed Roman sovereignty (ch. x.).

In the third cycle, this triple system is not developed, probably because of the failure of the author's health. Chapter xi. is divided into fourteen sections, treating of a variety of subjects, such as the religious life of Israel without national life; the composition and the antiquity of the old Testament; the Second Isaiah; Ezra; Chronicles; Zachariah; Esther; Daniel; Ezekiel; Ecclesiastes; many of the Psalms and Apocrypha; the completion of the Canon; the sects of the time; the Great Synagogue; and the relative importance of tradition. Chapter xiii. deals with the rise of Jewish philosophy in the Greek cities, Philo, Gnosticism, and the Greek versions of the Bible. Chapter xiv. contains a brief history of the Halakah, the Haggadah, and the Midrashim. In ch. xv. is an attack on Cabala and Gnosticism, and a definition of Metatron, Messiah, and soul. In chapters xvi. and xvii. the influence of Hegel and Ibn Ezra is clearly seen. In chapter xvi. Krochmal gives a sort of introduction to a philosophy of Jewish history, based upon the principles of Hegel. Chapter xvii. is

a synopsis of Ibn Ezra's philosophy, and an explanation of his idea of God.

It was not an easy matter to present a systematic and comprehensive view of the philosophy of Jewish history. Because so little had been done in this line of work, it was necessary for Krochmal to go far afield to discuss all kinds of problems. He was the first to offer a systematic philosophy of Jewish history, regularly divided into parts, and to treat critically, yet with reverence, moot points of the Scriptures, the Apocrypha, and Talmudic and Midrashic literature. Of this volume, I. H. Weiss, one of the greatest living Jewish scholars, critics, and historians,<sup>1</sup> says: "Know that, despite the exaltedness of his imagination,—for he had taken wings and had risen to the heights of philosophy,—it is to be lamented that he forgot the world of reality. Besides . . . he filled a great portion of his book with investigations concerning the ideas of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra, a philosophy secret and hidden, by means of which he interpreted secret by secret, riddle by riddle; so that in the end both the secret and the interpretation thereof remain almost unsolvable conundrums. I am not ashamed to acknowledge that some of his interpretations are beyond my grasp."

Krochmal was the philosopher among these early students. His influence on the historico-critical school is not to be gaged so much by this volume as by the stimulus he gave to the researches of others. The work itself was not published till after the middle of the nineteenth century, by which time other scholars had treated upon the historical data that form the nucleus of the "Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman." The greatest of his disciples was Solomon Judah Rapoport.

It would be erroneous to infer that the work discouraged the continuance by his successors of the labors of the author; for the portions on Halakah were later developed by Isaac H. Weiss, in his "Dor Dor we-Dorshaw," and by others.

Krochmal was the first of the modern school of critics to break away from the medievalism in which Galicia was steeped. Because of his powers as an educator and reformer, Zunz has well styled him the "Mendelssohn of Galicia."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Zikronotai*, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 153.

## CHAPTER III

## SOLOMON JUDAH (LOEB) RAPOPORT

SOLOMON JUDAH (LOEB) RAPOPORT was born in Lemberg, Galicia, June 1, 1790. Both on his father's and on his mother's side he descended from a worthy line<sup>1</sup> of Talmudists, from whom he inherited his intellectual qualities and his love for Hebrew. Like Krochmal, Rapoport grew up in the Jewish culture which had been inherited from medieval times, and was surrounded by influences antagonistic to modern scholarly research. In attempting to free himself from the old régime, he, too, became the target at which the arrows of those opposed to progress were directed. Despite all this, despite even the objections of those about him, he would not be satisfied with what seemed to him to be inaccurate or uncertain. In the service of true knowledge he resolved to dedicate his life to solving some of the difficulties that beset him at every step in Jewish history.

Rapoport was a thorough Talmudist and Biblical exegete, acquainted with French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Persian, and Arabic, in all of which he was self-educated. But what is more astonishing is the fact that he also possessed strong religious convictions. These convictions the acquisition of secular knowledge, and the influence which various literatures must have had upon him, failed to shake. He was always true to his inner self, and never wavered in his belief; for this belief was embedded too deeply in his nature to be uprooted by any temporary doubt. In religious matters, while Rapoport's views were not in sympathy with those of the older orthodox party, in his reform he was conservative, and opposed all radical measures.<sup>2</sup> He insisted upon the necessity of observing not only the

<sup>1</sup> The family Rapoport was an old and honorable one, of which there are records dating from the fifteenth century. For a history of the family, the origin of its name, and its connection with Raven and Puerto, cf. BRANN, *Die Familie Rapoport — das Geschlecht der jungen Raben*, in *Das Centenarium S. J. L. Rapoport's in Festgabe der Oesterreichischen Wochenschrift*, June 1, 1890; ELIAKIM CARMOLY, *Ha-Orevim u-Bene Yonah*, Rödelheim, 1861, and JACOB REIFMANN in Smolenski's *Ha-Shahar*, iii. 353-376. Compare, also, S. WIENER, *Da'at Kedoshim*, pp. 135 *et seq.*, St. Petersburg, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Hence RAPOPORT's *Or ha-Torah*, a criticism of GEIGER's *Urschrift*, published, after his death, in *Naḥalat Judah*, by his son, Cracow, 1868.

written law, but also the traditional law. Yet the man—upright in all his ways, pious and sincere in all his views—was declared by his enemies to be a heretic, a destroyer of morals, unfit for the company and the instruction of the young. Plots of all description were so frequently and at times so ingeniously concocted against him that his life was one continuous torture. His enemies were able to malign him and to make his life more unbearable than Krochmal's had been, because Rapoport sought rabbinical honors. Continual were the attempts to sully his reputation, to blast his hopes and aspirations, even to take away his means of support. But as in Krochmal's case each successive illness made him more steadfast in purpose, more determined to push on investigation, so with Rapoport each attack made him more than ever resolved to conquer. He set himself tasks the mere conception of which would frighten men less bold. Having to defend his opinions, attacked on all sides, sometimes justly, more often unjustly, and not being free from cares, he could not devote his attention to the completion of the work he had mapped out for himself; the mere plan of which suffices to show that labor had no terrors for him.

Notwithstanding his unfulfilled promises, that which Rapoport accomplished entitles him to a place among the foremost of the great Jewish scholars of the nineteenth century. In all his works, he united a thorough knowledge of specifically Jewish with secular wisdom: he pleaded that the young should not only be instructed in the Bible and the Talmud, but that they should receive a better general education. "Dost thou think that Judaism can stand by itself without taking from other people? . . . God scattered us over the world to learn here a little, there a little, . . . to be both pupil and teacher."<sup>1</sup>

Rapoport's work will appeal more to us and will appear in a better light if the conditions and the drawbacks that hampered it are thoroughly realized. His whole self was centered in a professional life; he had little or no inclination for trade or for a business occupation. A bright future had early been prophesied for him. His father, who during the early years of his son's life had ample means to give him a good training and to indulge him in all his desires, became impoverished; and from that time Rapoport was compelled to shift for himself. He began a small business of his own; but it was not suc-

<sup>1</sup>Letter to Luzzatto, dated 28 Nisan, 5601 (1841): *Letters of Rapoport*, p. 108.



cessful. In 1815 he accepted a position as bookkeeper and cashier with a firm that had rented from the Government the farming and collection of the tax levied upon each Jew for the right to eat ritually killed meat.<sup>1</sup> During these years (till 1832) Rapoport continued his studies. His articles began to attract the attention of the learned as well as the antagonism of the ignorant. The time left him after the completion of his clerical duties was not sufficient to finish his work. He saw he could not serve two masters at the same time. If he should pay attention to the dictates of his heart and give all his time to the support of his family, his intellect must starve; if he should yield to the demand of his intellect his family must starve. Either was an evil *in essentia*.<sup>2</sup> "The support of my house occupies the time of day. Only a few hours of the night are left me to provide for my soul; and these are not sufficient to investigate and to put the result into proper form. During the last few years I began to seek a place as rabbi, thinking that in such a position I might rest, . . . that I might dwell in the house of God all the days of my life, that I might produce pleasant thoughts, and bring to light my great works."<sup>3</sup> Here was a poor bookkeeper, consumed by the love of knowledge and by hatred of his occupation, seeking a position as rabbi, in order to have more certain means of sustenance, and more leisure to concentrate his thoughts on his work.

In 1832, probably at the instigation of his enemies, Rapoport was discharged from his position. In attempting to secure a call as rabbi, he gave his accusers a wider field for attack.

We can not follow him in his frequent applications for positions, nor in his numerous letters imploring those with whom he corresponded to exert their influence in his behalf. There was always some objection: now it was doubt as to his ability to deliver sermons in the vernacular; now his advanced ideas were to his discredit; and again, not having a university education or degree he was disqualified, according to the laws of certain countries, for appointment to the positions for which he applied. Back of all were the hands of his enemies.

<sup>1</sup> BERNFELD, *Toledot Shir*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Luzzatto, in *Kerem Hemed*, i. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Letters to Solomon Rosenthal, dated 28d of Adar 5592 (1832); *Shai le-Moreh*, p. 24, edited by ALEXANDER BÜCHLER, Budapest (possibly 1895). The "great works" here alluded to are *Toledot Anshe Shem* and *Erek Millin*.

Rapoport's first call to a rabbinate came when he was forty-seven years old. In 1837 he was elected rabbi in Tarnopol, Galicia. But even there his time was fully occupied in defending himself from his accusers. A vacancy occurred in the rabbinate of Prague, and Rapoport after much difficulty was proposed as a candidate. In 1840, through the instrumentality of Michael Sachs, then preacher in Prague, and the *Maskilim* (educated members) of the congregation, he was called there as rabbi of the Alt-neue Synagoge.<sup>1</sup>

His first sermon in Prague satisfied all his hearers, and quieted all doubts as to his ability to fill the position. Unfortunately, the ardor that at first attended his presence in the city gradually lessened, and he was regarded with less veneration. The *Maskilim* who brought about his election had expected him to be more liberal; the hyper-orthodox thought him insincere. "That which thou hast asked about our friend, the wise Rapoport, and concerning his achievements in Prague, I will tell you in a few words. Both factions are now against him. The *Maskilim* believed that Rapoport would bring about changes in religious observances according to the times. Now they see that their counsel was not taken. The learned and God-fearing [*i.e.*, hyper-orthodox], on the other hand, are against him because although Rapoport, like them, retains all the customs of Israel, they do, nevertheless, suspect him of hypocrisy."<sup>2</sup>

Eagerly as Rapoport sought quiet and rest "to dwell in the house of God, to study the Torah and investigate the ancient history of Israel, to work over the words of the ancient rabbis, to dispel the clouds that darken justice,"<sup>3</sup> the longed-for peace never came. From the time of his acceptance of the rabbinate in Prague until his death, October 16, 1867, his life was a continual strife. He himself acknowledged that he had greater freedom of action during the years of his clerkship. During those years of comparative independence, the best of his works were planned and written. While in Tarnopol, he produced nothing of value, and in Prague little more. Active

<sup>1</sup> He had no specified salary, but the wealthy of the congregation gave him annually a purse of five hundred florins in addition to certain perquisites. This sum was later raised to six hundred (BERNFELD, *Toledot Shir*, p. 106).

<sup>2</sup> Letters from Moses Landau to Samuel Rosenthal, 1841, cited by BERNFELD, *Toledot Shir*, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> First letter to Luzzatto after Rapoport's arrival in Prague (*Letters of Rapoport*, p. 216).

almost till his death, he published some articles after his arrival in Prague,<sup>1</sup> but these are not marked by the originality and spontaneity of thought of his earlier years.<sup>2</sup>

Rapoport's works may be divided as follows:

I. Early Prose Writings.

II. Verse:

(a) Hebrew.

(b) Translations into Hebrew.

(1) Poems.

(2) Drama.

III. Correspondence and Polemics.

IV. Critical Works:

(a) Biblical.

(b) Historical—bibliographies of scholars of the Middle Ages.  
("Anshe Shem"—which, though promised, never appeared.)

(c) Talmudic.

Early in life Rapoport exhibited a taste for literature. His youth had been devoted mainly to the study of the Talmud, the keen discussions of which sharpened his intellect and made possible acute thought and nice distinctions. Fortunately, he soon discarded the use of pilpul,<sup>3</sup> though, when hard pressed to defend his theories, he would use the same. Innate keenness was allied to graceful style, which was rendered the more forcible and convincing by a thorough mastery of the subject in hand. His first Hebrew prose work was a "Description of the City of Paris and the Island of Elba."<sup>4</sup> The first work to draw attention to the author, however, was an article in the "Bikkure ha-'Ittim,"<sup>5</sup> on "The Free Jews of Arabia." Because of its value, the article was translated into German by Fürst.<sup>6</sup> The kind reception of this early work was more than the author had counted upon, and served as an incentive to more earnest effort.

In poetry Rapoport was not so successful as in prose; for the

<sup>1</sup>The '*Erek Millin* was published after his arrival in Prague, but was planned, begun, and doubtless partly written before. The best of his works written entirely in Prague was an article published in the *Kerem Hemed*, v. 197-232, an attack on the perjuries and falsifications of the Karaites.

<sup>2</sup>M. STEINSCHNEIDER, *Gegenwart*, 1867, p. 338.

<sup>3</sup>The technical term for Rabbinical casuistry. <sup>4</sup>Anonymous, Lemberg, 1814.

<sup>5</sup>1823, iv. 51-77. <sup>6</sup>*Orient*, i., No. 25; ii. 397.

thought he wishes to convey is frequently vague, and his expression is heavier than in prose, because he pays greater attention to form than to the thought expressed.<sup>1</sup> He lacked both the poetic temperament and poetic inspiration. Possibly because he felt this defect, he applied himself to the translation of verse rather than to the composition of original themes.<sup>2</sup> In poetry he was pre-eminently an imitator. His first attempt was "Hazzalahat ha-Bayit" (the Prosperity of the House),<sup>3</sup> a partial translation and revision of Schiller's "Glocke." The same theme served later as material for another translation, "Ha-Be'eräh" (the Fire-Bell).<sup>4</sup> He wrote and translated many other poems; but they added very little to his reputation. His dramas are better known than his poems. When thirty-five years old, he published one which is in the main a translation of Racine's "Esther," entitled "She'erit Yehudah" (the Remnant of Judah),<sup>5</sup> in the introduction to which are to be found some of Rapoport's first attempts at Biblical criticism.

The writing of verse was for Rapoport only a passing fancy. Yet the periods spent in belles-lettres during his early years were not entirely without direct benefit to him. They formed, as it were, his apprenticeship in literature, and served him later in good stead; for during these years of apprenticeship his style was refined, and his taste given time to mature and develop. His style became pure and simple, his vocabulary being preferably that of the Bible. Few of his contemporaries could equal him in prose writing.<sup>6</sup>

More interesting than his early writings are his letters<sup>7</sup> and his contributions to polemical literature. He maintained an extensive correspondence with all the leading Jews of his day. Scholars gladly kept in touch with him, and used this means of communication to place before him for solution many difficult problems. In

<sup>1</sup> BERNFELD, *Toledot Shir*, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> WEISS, *Zikronotai*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> *Bikkure ha-'Ittim*, 1820, i. 110.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1826, vii. 116.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1827, viii. 172-254.

<sup>6</sup> WEISS, *Zikronotai*, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> His letters to Luzzatto have been edited: (a) *Zikkaron la-Aharonim* containing six letters (1829-1833) to S. D. Luzzatto, by A. HARKAVY with notes by S. J. HALBERSTAM, Wilna, 1881; (b) *Iggerot Shir*, letters to S. D. Luzzatto, 1833-1860, edited and annotated by S. J. HALBERSTAM, Przemyśl, 1885. Some of his letters relative to his career in Prague will be found in *Shai le-Moreh*, ed. ALEXANDER BÜCHLER, 1895. Other letters appeared in the various periodicals of his time. A few relative to his appointment in Prague have been translated into German in the *Centenarium Rapoport's*, already referred to.

this way many writers, even the masters,<sup>1</sup> received their inspiration and much of their information. The direct and indirect influence of Rapoport's correspondence, irrespective of his own publications, upon the pamphlets and books of others can, perhaps, never fully be told. In his day his superiority was recognized. He was an encyclopedia of Jewish learning; and on questions of difficulty, he was the final authority.<sup>2</sup>

His polemical writings present a different side of the man's character. Unlike Krochmal, he was proud and at times overbearing and headstrong.<sup>3</sup> His polemics were directed against two different classes: (1) the Hasidim, and (2) that type of men of which the editors of the "Ha-Ro'eh" (the Spectator) were the representatives, who used their journal to abuse Rapoport, Zunz, Luzzatto, and Reggio rather than criticize their views, who frequently incited the mob against Rapoport, and tried to wrest from him all chance of election to the rabbinical office in Prague. Justifiable as his wrath was, his retort but aggravated the situation. In this part of his polemical writings we can sympathize with him; but his others were not so justifiable, as they were directed against those within his own circle who meant no harm to his person nor desired to diminish his fame, but who, like him, strove for truth, and hence tested the veracity of his statements.

Rapoport resented criticism, and disliked any one who questioned his assertions.<sup>4</sup> He used all means to controvert their opinions, and did not have the heart to acknowledge the truth<sup>5</sup> of their argument. But dear to him as were his own writings, equally so were those of Maimonides and Ibn Ezra. He who ventured to controvert aught written by them had to reckon with Rapoport.

This spirit, naturally, plunged him into lengthy controversies, and deprived him of much time that might have been spent on the works he had hoped to finish.<sup>6</sup> By one of these controversies the friendship between the two scholars, Luzzatto and Rapoport, was

<sup>1</sup> Compare Zunz's acknowledgment of his debt to Rapoport through his correspondence, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, 2d ed., p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Such as the questions of the 49 Middot of Rabbi Nathan of Babylon. Compare *Behinat ha-Dat (Examen religionis)* of Rabbi ELIJAH DEL MEDIGO, edited by I. S. REGGIO, 1833, p. 91, note 6.

<sup>3</sup> WEISS, *Zikronotai*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> WEISS, *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

broken.<sup>1</sup> When Rapoport saw that not one scholar only, but all scholars were in arms against his overbearing disposition, he was compelled to modify his tone. "It is not my purpose to reprove, but to instruct . . . If, as you say, you have found errors in my works, or if you think you will find more, behold! I am man and not God. What man is there who shall say, 'I have purged my works of all error and cleansed them of doubt'? What can you say against my works in general? Are not the paths I lay bare good? Did I not work with all my heart to come nigh to truth? Did you not find in many places wisdom and good taste? Have I not shown the way to others? Long since have all those who examined with upright heart acknowledged that I am he who made known in Israel the way of learning. I dug the ancient history of Israel from beneath mounds of dust in order to shed light upon it. From that time the spirit of investigation spread in Italy and Germany . . . By my soul, only for your sake and for the welfare of Jeshurun—not mine own—I turned to speak to you in the fulness of my heart."<sup>2</sup>

The importance, however, of Rapoport is to be found in the work he has done as a critic.<sup>3</sup> In his historico-critical studies the full extent of his erudition and wisdom is seen. In these he was most successful; and it is solely because of them that his name will go down to posterity.

After the close of the Talmud and throughout the Middle Ages much obscurity seemed to surround many of the Jewish celebrities. Rapoport set himself the task of clearing this away; so that in presenting the results of his study he revived names which, though current among the Jews, were mere shades of a dead past.

<sup>1</sup> Luzzatto had disparagingly criticized Maimonides and Ibn Ezra, for which Rapoport challenged him.

<sup>2</sup> *Kerem Hemed*, vi. 94. Other semi-polemical, semi-critical works were: (a) *Or ha-Torah*, Cracow, 1868, a criticism of Geiger's *Urschrift* for having handled the material of the Bible too freely; (b) *Dibre Shalom ve-Emet*, Prague, 1861, which was directed against S. M. Hirsch, and in defense of Z. Frankel's *Darke ha-Mishnah*; (c) a dispute with Jost, in *Kerem Hemed*, iv. 104 *et seq.*, vii. 138 *et seq.* in regard to Judah the Prince.

<sup>3</sup> Rapoport's essay on Biblical criticism in the notes of the *She'erit Yehudah* has already been mentioned. As a Biblical critic he was modest; yet, considering his surroundings, he must be judged liberal. Though he thought he was ever in keeping with the Masoretic text—and he no doubt always meant to restrict himself to its dicta—he confessed he found traces of Maccabean influence in the Psalms, and traces of Persian influence in the Second Isaiah.

The manner in which Rapoport was first directed to this particular field of study is interesting. Some time after he had begun to read French, a copy of Bayle's "Dictionnaire historique et critique"—a sort of encyclopedia of the bibliographies of historic personages—fell into his hands.<sup>1</sup> After having studied its contents it occurred to him to produce something similar in Hebrew, which should contain the biographies of eminent Jewish historic persons and should be entitled "Toledot Anshe Shem" (Biographies of Eminent Men). From repeated references in his earlier writings, especially in his correspondence, he led scholars to believe that his "Erek Millin" and his "Toledot Anshe Shem" had already been completed, or were very near completion.<sup>2</sup> After his death, no trace of such a work as the "Anshe Shem" was to be found. That the author did intend to publish such a work is certain. He regards his biographies as a "few sketches culled from the contents of my greater work."<sup>3</sup> According to Weiss, the historical notes appended to the "Erek Millin" might serve as a nucleus for such a work.<sup>4</sup> If his biographical studies are representative of his greater work, it is a pity that the task was never completed: for the study of Jewish literature and Jewish history its worth would have been inestimable.

Of his biographies the first to appear was that of Saadia (1828).<sup>5</sup> This was followed in 1829 by the biographies of Nathan of Rome,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> KURLANDER, S. L. *Rapoport*, p. 20; *Das Centenarium Rapoport's*, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> ZUNZ, in his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, 2d ed., p. xii., mentions the forthcoming volume: "Anshe Schem, worin das Leben und Werken der hervorragendsten jüdischen Gesetzlehrer, Rabbiner und Schriftsteller, namentlich aus dem talmudischen und der gaonäischen Zeit beschrieben werden."

<sup>3</sup> *Shai le-Moreh*, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Zikronotai*, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Saadia ben Joseph al-Fayyumi (892-942), Gaon of Sura, philosopher, grammarian, lexicographer, and translator.

<sup>6</sup> Nathan ben Jehiel of Rome [circa 1000], compiler of the 'Aruk or Talmudic lexicon. This biography later caused him much inconvenience and almost lost for him his appointment as rabbi in Prague. Between 1819 and 1822, Moses Landau, the president of the congregation to which Rapoport was later called, had published in five parts an 'Aruk which he called *Ma'arke Lashon*. In his biography of Nathan of Rome, Rapoport gave Landau due praise for his attempt, but at the same time showed the true nature of Landau's work, which at best was Rabbi Nathan's 'Aruk changed somewhat in form. This is but one instance of Rapoport's fearlessness. Future benefit, or the influence that any one exerted, never deterred him from proclaiming the truth. In this biography Rapoport announced the appearance of the 'Erek Millin, as a continuation of the 'Aruk.

Hai Gaon,<sup>1</sup> and Eleazar Kalir;<sup>2</sup> while those of Rabbi Hananeel<sup>3</sup> and Rabbi Nissim ben Jacob<sup>4</sup> appeared in 1831. These biographies were the best work that Rapoport produced, and were completed six or seven years before his appointment to Tarnopol.

Rapoport was too poor to publish them in book-form, and was compelled to resort to the periodicals, in which they appeared as monographs. In this case poverty was a benefit to Rapoport's fame; for the periodicals spread much farther and reached readers who would not have had the means to invest in books. The biographical studies made him famous; and the world began to recognize him as an authority. Rapoport was now forty years old. Though there were many errors of detail in his work, yet, as a whole, it was thorough, and gave a certain direction to the study of Jewish history. "The six biographies in the 'Bikkure ha-'Ittim' were diamond-mines for the historian of Jewish literature."<sup>5</sup>

Besides giving a lucid account of the biography of each of his heroes and an instructive résumé of their work, he embodied in his studies an accurate portrayal of the culture of the time in which they lived. He outlined the relation and intercourse of the Jewish communities in the different parts of Europe, North Africa, and Asia during those ages of which so little was known. In some cases he settled dates which hitherto had been quite uncertain; in others, he corrected gross errors that had been made by previous scholars; and he showed that an exact idea of the development of Jewish learning could not be obtained by the study of any individual community or of any particular group of scholars dwelling in any one locality, but that, as intercourse between Jews the world over was so constant, and as each community was influenced by others, a knowledge of the state of the Jews in one place, to be thorough, must include a knowledge of their condition throughout the world.

His other great critical work was the "Erek Millin,"<sup>6</sup> an encyclo-

<sup>1</sup> Hai ben Sherira [969-1039], Gaon of Pumbedita, and an eminent Talmudist. He was the representative of the Judaism of his day; and all difficult questions were referred to him.

<sup>2</sup> About Eleazar Kalir very little is known. He is supposed to have lived at the beginning of the ninth century and was a great payyetan (religious poet).

<sup>3</sup> Hananeel and Nissim ben Jacob, both of Kairwan, North Africa, were noted Talmudists in the first half of the eleventh century.

<sup>4</sup> F. DELITZSCH, *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie* (1836), p. 119.

<sup>5</sup> "Erek Millin, opus encyclopædicum, alphab. ordine dispositum in quo et res



pedia of Talmudic terms arranged alphabetically. The work represents the toil of an entire life. It was begun in Rapoport's youth; and had not the troubles which befell him during the period of his greatest intellectual activity interrupted his studies, we should have had a voluminous encyclopedia—a herculean task for one man. His troubled life in Tarnopol and Prague, however, gave him no time to finish his "great works."

When Rapoport resumed his work on the encyclopedia, he had passed his sixtieth year without having published a single volume. He felt that his remaining years were few, and, therefore, hastened the work as much as possible, with the result that the first part, containing the entire letter Aleph, was published.<sup>1</sup> After the enthusiastic welcome his biographies had received, the reception of the first volume of the long-promised encyclopedia must have grieved the old scholar; for it did not realize the anticipations of the learned world.

Whatever the faults of the work, it had many good qualities. By it were explained many passages in the Talmud and the Midrashim relative to historic occurrences which, because of vagueness, had hitherto been misunderstood and misinterpreted, and had been a source of much perplexity to scholars. Owing to Rapoport's investigations many doubtful passages have received their correct historical setting, many ambiguous terms have been given their correct signification, and to formerly unknown places localities have been supplied.

Rapoport presented much interesting matter relating to the sects among the Jews in Talmudic times; and by his study of the Haggadah and the classification of the same, he simplified to a considerable extent the work of Zunz. Though the "Erek Millin" was published long after "Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge," it is probable, judging from Zunz's recognition of his debt to Rapoport, in the introduction to the latter work, that he made use of the wide knowledge of the Galician student.

In the "Erek Millin" there are evident traces of Krochmal's influ-

*et voces ad historiam, geographiam, archæologiam, dignitates, sectas, illustresque homines spectantes quæ in utroque Talmude, Tosefta, Targumicis, Midrashicisque libris occurrunt necdum satis explicatæ sunt, illustrantur. I. Continens totam Litteram Aleph, Prague, 1852.*

<sup>1</sup> Rapoport made a special journey to Berlin to consult with his friends, Zunz and Sachs, in regard to raising the necessary funds for the publication of the volume (BERNFELD, *Toledot Shir*), p. 124.

ence upon Rapoport. In his eulogy<sup>1</sup> on Krochmal, Rapoport acknowledged that from the time he came in contact with his teacher and friend he was a different man. To Krochmal is due much of Rapoport's knowledge, and especially his interest in historical research.<sup>2</sup> Where the influence of Krochmal upon Rapoport began and where it ended may never be known. Yet it is evident that Rapoport's Talmudic studies were guided, to a very great extent, by Krochmal's spirit.<sup>3</sup> Weiss goes further and says<sup>4</sup> "that all the things worth hearing in the chapter on Haggadah are taken from Krochmal, differing only in form and expression; and that the additions made by Rapoport are of small value." In other words, Rapoport's Talmudic investigations are supplementary to those already made by his master, and augmented Krochmal's results but little.

In his biographical and purely historical studies Rapoport was undoubtedly a pioneer. In these he was entirely original. Because of his wide knowledge of the Talmud and Midrash, and because of his critical turn of mind, he was the first to extract historical data from passages out of which none had hoped to obtain information. In this lay his originality. It is true that Zunz's life of Rashi antedated the appearance of Rapoport's biographies. What if Rapoport saw this and used it as the pattern for his biographies? This does not detract from the merit of the Galician, whose articles, by the method of criticism he employed, paved the way in which all who wished to treat of Jewish history must follow, and which articles were used by the great German student, who willingly admits his indebtedness. Zunz himself acknowledged that the palm belonged to Rapoport.<sup>5</sup> Wherefore for Rapoport may justly be claimed the honor of having been the father of modern Hebrew biography.

<sup>1</sup> *Keren Hemed*, vi. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie*, 1863, p. 312, note.

<sup>3</sup> BERNFELD, *Toledot Shir*, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav*, ii. 24, note.

<sup>5</sup> BERNFELD, *Ibid.*, p. 32, note.

## CHAPTER IV

## ISAAC SAMUEL REGGIO

THE first of the Italian school to attract our attention is Isaac Samuel Reggio (Yashar). He was born August 15, 1784, in Gorizia, and died August 29, 1855. His life, as he himself acknowledged,<sup>1</sup> was uneventful and devoid of interest to others. Son and successor of Rabbi Abraham Vita Reggio, who was noted for his attack upon the local rabbis and his defense of Wessely's program of higher education for the Jew,<sup>2</sup> Isaac was reared at home in an atmosphere whose chief characteristics were extreme piety and liberality of view. The Bible and the Talmud were the bases of his rabbinical studies; the best grammatical and exegetical works were most carefully read. Secular studies, however, were not ignored. For these he attended the gymnasium and college of his native city. Of the subjects taken while at college, mathematics was his favorite study. When eighteen years old, he solved a prize problem offered by a Hungarian Society of Science<sup>3</sup> which made him famous in his native town, and later secured for him a professor's chair at the college of Gorizia. At the end of the Napoleonic influence in Illyria, Reggio was compelled to resign this chair; and the rest of his life he devoted to the study of the history, literature, and religion of his people. To further that study, he used every possible source of information. A Persian grammar, to which was appended a vocabulary of Persian words, is said<sup>4</sup> to have fallen into his hands. Reggio set himself to learn this grammar and vocabulary in order to be able to trace the Persian influences which he was convinced were to be found in the Talmud.

Like most of the Jews of the Italy of his day, Reggio was in his youth greatly interested in the Cabala, and eagerly read and studied all the cabalistic works that came within his reach. But in the Cabala he could find no solace; and he, therefore, turned to what, at that time, must have been considered the other extreme. He began to study thoroughly the works of Mendelssohn and Wessely. A new field was opened to him, and gave him renewed inspiration. In Italy

<sup>1</sup> *Maskeret Yashar*, p. 4, Vienna, 1849.

<sup>2</sup> PHILIPSON'S *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, 1837, i. 228.

<sup>3</sup> *Maskeret Yashar*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Zikronotai*, p. 153.

Mendelssohn and Wessely were practically unknown. Reggio resolved to be their disciple, their exponent.<sup>1</sup>

The first article published by Reggio in Hebrew was an introductory study of the Pentateuch (Vienna, 1821), in which he upheld the inspiration of the Law. In the same year he published a new translation of the Pentateuch in Italian, together with a commentary, which was very well received. A series of translations of and commentaries on the Scriptures followed. Among these, the translation of Isaiah (1821) deserves special mention, in that it was a paraphrase prompted by Gesenius' translation of the same book.<sup>2</sup> Such work was more or less in imitation of his masters'. Mendelssohn's and Wessely's translations were his patterns; their exegesis was the basis for his commentaries. In these commentaries the liberal training of his youth asserted itself. He cared for and sought only truth. The Bible was sacred only in so far as it proclaimed the truth. He employed the methods of modern Biblical criticism. "Thus I show you, my friend, one of many examples of the use of modern criticism and its preference over ancient investigation."<sup>3</sup> He attacked the traditional view that the Psalms, even those inscribed "to David," or "by David," were written by that king. According to Reggio, their contents renders such a theory untenable. He also attempted to determine the date of Joel.<sup>4</sup> Joel, he affirmed, lived and prophesied in the first years of the reign of King Joash of Judah, during the supremacy of the priests. Because the priests were then all-powerful, the king's name is not mentioned.

Reggio's ideals were high. He wanted to be more than a translator and an exegete.<sup>5</sup> He did not wish to be simply a bibliographer; for bibliographers, he wrote,<sup>6</sup> "deal only with trivial and secondary information. Patience and perseverance, not erudition, are required to accomplish their joyless task." Neither did he care to do such work as Zunz had accomplished, "to spend day and night in search of *piyyut*, *seliha*, and other forms of poetry, or to correct what was only a misprint." "When a book like this appears, a great shout arises in the camp of the Hebrews. With a voice of joy, mirth, and

<sup>1</sup> *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, Beiblatt No. 36, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 1821 (not completed till 1829).

<sup>3</sup> *Maskeret Yashar*, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> In the *Yalkut Yashar*, 1854, Reggio published a collection of critical notes on the Bible.

<sup>6</sup> *Maskeret Yashar*, pp. 6, 7.

exultation, the grand and wonderful discovery is heralded as if the prosperity of the nation depended on it."<sup>1</sup> All such knowledge was secondary in Reggio's eyes. His task was to be the exploration of that realm from which the greatest possible good would come to Israel. In his Biblical studies he was an imitator. But he did not wish to be merely the disciple of Mendelssohn and of Wessely: he desired to be their successor, to be a philosopher, to rank among those who had written on the philosophy of religion. He aspired to be the philosopher of modern Judaism.

He persuaded himself that his mission lay in reconciling philosophy and Judaism. The desire to do this arose from a consideration of conditions within the ranks of the Jews, and because of a certain pressure from without. In Israel two factions were arrayed against each other, each party holding steadfastly to its own doctrines. On the one hand, were the strict followers of tradition and the Talmud, who did not consider it necessary to go outside of that which had been handed down by the Fathers; on the other, were those who believed that truth and knowledge were to be found only through science and philosophy, and who in the pursuit of these studies eyed Talmudism with a certain scorn.

The governmental decree forbidding communities to instal rabbis who had not taken courses in science and philosophy<sup>2</sup> widened the breach; for it tended to produce rabbis having only a secular education. This had, at all hazards, to be prevented. "If rabbis," said Reggio, "who are not philosophers may not be acceptable, then philosophers who are not Bible students shall not be welcomed." He pointed out the need of a seminary where Jewish theological students should be instructed in rabbinical studies after they had fulfilled all requirements imposed upon the clergy by the Government.<sup>3</sup> The next problem was to reconcile the two opposing parties within the Jewish body; and this could only be solved by constructing a system that should obviate in the future all discussion concerning the incompatibility of religion and science. "Had I seen that the bitter strife, waging between those who sought knowledge and their opponents, had been confined to ancient times, I should have remained silent. The

<sup>1</sup> *Maskeret Yashar*, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> 1822.

<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to this plea, the Collegium Rabbinicum of Padua was incorporated in 1829.

bitterness continues, and in an increased measure. . . . For Israel's sake, it is essential that a remedy be found before the evil be beyond repair."<sup>1</sup> This was the *Motif* of Reggio's greatest work, "Ha-Torah we ha-Philosophia" (the Law versus Philosophy).

Before treating of this work, it may be well to say a word on two other works which Reggio prepared with the same end in view. In 1833 he edited, with notes, the "Behinat ha-Dat" (*Examen religionis*) of Elijah del Medigo "for the purpose of enlightening our people on the bases of pure religion,"<sup>2</sup> and of weaning them from ceremonials and ideas which he considered to be mere survivals of the Middle Ages. In 1847 Reggio edited the "Behinat ha-Kabbalah" (*Examen traditionis*) of Judah (Aryeh) de Modena. Both of these works had, centuries before, given expression to views that thoroughly coincided with Reggio's own. Of the two, the latter is the more radical. It depicts medieval Jewish culture and the striving of an individual to rise superior to his environment. In this volume questions were discussed that were crucial ones for the scholars of the nineteenth century. Reggio's edition caused great excitement, and estranged many that had been his friends. Some even suggested that the story of his having found the manuscript in Parma in Judah's own handwriting was a fabrication, and that Reggio had written the entire volume.<sup>3</sup> Reggio emphatically denied this.<sup>4</sup> "In working over the volume," wrote Reggio, "a new light was opened to me, by which I might publish my views, how reform might with advantage change some religious observances." The notes appended are each a separate study, and contain Reggio's ideas on the origin and the chain of the oral law, the sources of the Talmud, and the purposes of its compilers.<sup>5</sup>

The "Torah we ha-Philosophia" was an attempt to reconcile the two opposing factions. To the Talmudists he wished to show that a study of philosophy, far from doing harm, would assist the student in explaining many obscure points in Bible and Talmud. The real danger lay in the one-sided study of both parties. Both were wrong in arguing from a false premise that the Talmud interdicted the study

<sup>1</sup> *Ha-Torah we ha-Philosophia*, Vienna, 1824, introduction, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Behinat ha-Dat*, introduction, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Zikronotai*, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> *Ozar Neḥmad*, i. 33, 35; ii. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Maskeret Yashar*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Reggio had partially treated on these in Jost's *Annalen*, 1839, p. 69; 1840, pp. 106, 114, 121, 130; 1841, pp. 121, 130.

of philosophy. The "Torah we ha-Philosophia" is divided into three parts, which may be summarized as follows:

Part 1: The Jews before the Babylonian exile were occupied with the study of the Law; and only when they came in contact with the people of other nations—especially with the Greeks in Alexandria—was philosophy made known to them (pp. 3–7). The study of philosophy was never forbidden by the Talmud (pp. 8–13). After the close of the Talmud, some scholars opposed the study of philosophy (pp. 14–18); but these were far outweighed in importance by those who encouraged it (pp. 18–24).

Part 2: This section of the work shows that philosophy will aid the elucidation of Scripture and Talmud by doing away with falsehood. Under philosophy Reggio includes astronomy, medicine, psychology, logic, ethics, physics, mineralogy, botany—in short, all the sciences except the Torah (Law).

Part 3: Is a general essay on the reconciliation of Judaism and philosophy.

Good as were the intentions of the author, as a philosophic study the work must be regarded as a failure. Its title does not fit the contents. There is in it no philosophy, and but little Torah.<sup>1</sup> The book cannot claim to rank among works treating on the philosophy of religion; for it contains few passages evidencing depth of thought, and such portions as are speculative in character have been taken from other books.<sup>2</sup> Only in one place does the author acknowledge this,—p. 163, in a note,—in which he begs the reader to remember that the rest of the volume has been written under the influence of Wessely. Levinson has proved<sup>3</sup> that the entire contents were plagiarized; that Reggio copied the mistakes of those from whom he borrowed; and that he is guilty of numerous errors in citations from secondary sources. These sources were Dei Rossi's "Me'or 'Enayim," the "Torat ha-Dorot," Wessely's works especially, and others less important.

As Reggio lacked originality of thought, and failed as a philosopher, his importance must be looked for elsewhere. It lies in the fact that he was a profound student, a thorough scholar in Hebrew

<sup>1</sup> LIBOWITCH, *Iggeret Bikkoret*, New York, 1896, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*; I. GOLDENTHAL, in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, Beiblatt No. 35, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> I. B. LEVINSON, *Jehoshaphat*, Warsaw, 1884.

grammar, Bible, and Talmud, and, preeminently, a stylist. In this respect Reggio has few equals; and his works show the extent to which modern Hebrew can be used. To him and his colleague is due the purification of modern Hebrew. They attempted to build up a modern Hebrew style upon the basis of the Biblical expression, and to coin words where the Bible did not offer a vocabulary sufficient to express modern thought.

Reggio's works will always command respect on account of their belles-lettristic value. In studying the history of the critical school, however, Reggio's importance will be found to lie in the fact that he acted as a medium for the transmission of influences other than his own. Through his translations and commentaries he was the herald of a new school for Italy, which Dr. Goldenthal has well styled ' "the Biurists," ' of whom S. D. Luzzatto was by far the most important.

In all his works Reggio stimulated investigation. He was for Italy what Krochmal was in a much greater degree for the North.

## CHAPTER V

### SAMUEL DAVID LUZZATTO

OF far greater powers than Reggio was Samuel David Luzzatto (Shedal); born in Trieste, August 22, 1800; died at Padua, September 29, 1865. Like many of his colleagues, Luzzatto descended from a family renowned for its scholars, of whom Moses Hayyim Luzzatto (1707-1747), mystic, poet, and dramatist, was the most eminent. Samuel's father, by trade a turner, was extremely poor, but very pious. Having lost two elder children, he superstitiously hoped to rear Samuel by training him religiously.

When only three and a half years old, Samuel was sent to school; at seven he began the study of Job. His love for Hebrew soon made itself evident; even at that early age the future grammarian and Biurist was beginning to develop. Young as he was, he felt the need of newer and better Bible commentaries than the ones which were ordinarily used by the Jews; and to his companions he confided

<sup>1</sup> *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, Beiblatt No. 36, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> *Biur* denotes "explanation," and is the name for Mendelssohn's commentary on the Pentateuch. The aim of these "Biurists" was to give a simple explanation of the text.



the hope that some day he would write even a better commentary than Rashi had written.<sup>1</sup> At the age of eleven he tested his powers by composing a Hebrew grammar in Italian, and by writing some notes on the Pentateuch; and at one and the same time he was engaged in the study of Hebrew, Italian, German, French, Latin, mathematics, and history.

The death of his mother in 1814 was a turning-point in Luzzatto's life. His straitened circumstances necessitated his leaving school to take care of the household; and he was frequently called upon to assist his father in providing bread for the family. These years of trial, which might easily have been fatal to his mental progress, proved in reality a decided blessing. Left to himself most of the time, he reflected upon his own and upon Israel's future. Studying unflaggingly, though without guide, without library, and without means, he read whatever book chance put in his way. Thus he perused the works of Soave, Condillac, and Locke, commenced to collect works on Hebrew poetry and to study its forms, especially the sonnet, and tried his strength at composition.

His father, thinking the boy indolent, urged upon him the necessity of learning some trade or profession. When fourteen years old, Luzzatto had some inclination to the practise of medicine, and began the preparatory studies for this calling; but, on his seeing Buxtorf's "Lexicon Talmudicum" and Coccejus' "Lexicon Sermonis Hebraici et Chaldaici," his love for Hebrew conquered, and his medical studies ceased. He refused to enter the ministry on account of the weakness of his voice, and because he wished his liberty in investigation to be in no way restricted.

Like Reggio, Luzzatto was for a time interested in the Cabala. He very soon saw that the whole science rested upon an unsound basis; and he set out to controvert its principles.<sup>2</sup> The Cabala, in his opinion, had undermined true knowledge. Luzzatto also reached the conclusion that even the Bible was not free from errors, and that commentators, in their attempts to rectify such errors, had fallen into

<sup>1</sup> LUZZATTO, *Autobiography* (German translation by M. GRÜNWARD), p. 46, Padua, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> As early as 1817, in a treatise entitled *Ma'amar ha-Nikkud*, Luzzatto gave his views on the age of the cabalistic book, *Zohar*, and on the antiquity of the punctuation and vocalization of the Scriptures. Similar material was published in *Wikkuaḥ 'al ha-Kabbala*, Gorizia, 1852.

others still graver. His literary feeling detected the fact that modern Hebrew literature was devoid of all beauty: a reform was necessary; and he resolved to be one of the reformers, to instruct his generation, to rekindle the love of purity and terseness, to regenerate the Hebrew language, and to regulate its use. He, therefore, resolved to study the Bible, in order to purge it of error, and to instil new life into the dead word. He determined to do all this and more not for personal aggrandizement, but from veneration of God, out of respect and love for the Law, and in token of gratitude toward his people.

Opportunities to engage in these studies soon presented themselves. Owing to the spirited plea of Reggio in behalf of a rabbinical college and the subsequent meetings on the subject in Northern Italy, a seminary was founded in Padua in 1829, to afford young men a systematic and scientific training in theological studies; and to Luzzatto, whose ability had by this time been recognized, was given the chair of philology, hermeneutics, and Biblical exegesis.

This was the crowning-point of Luzzatto's life: fame was his; students came to him from all quarters; and scholars sought his friendship and his counsel. His professional position gave Luzzatto independence, and enabled him to devote the rest of his life to his studies. "All my days," he wrote,<sup>1</sup> "my soul longed to investigate history . . . but I saw that such investigation required more books than were in my possession, and therefore I applied myself to linguistic research."

The preparation for his college work led him for a time to the almost exclusive study of the Bible and the Hebrew grammar. Later in life, the general inclination of scholars toward historical investigation, the repeated requests from students for information, and especially the influence of the works of Zunz and Rapoport, induced him to enter the lists of the students of Jewish history—with what success is well known.

Luzzatto's name first became prominent through contributions to the "*Bikkure ha-Ittim*," which were marked by elegance of style and poetic genius. His first noteworthy publication was the "*Kinor Na'im*"<sup>2</sup> (A Pleasant Harp), a collection of Hebrew poems, mainly

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Luzzatto*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i., composed at the age of fifteen, Vienna, 1825; vol. ii., posthumous, Padua, 1879.

translations from the Italian and the Latin. In 1821 had appeared a translation into Italian of a German prayer-book, which added little to his means, but much to his fame. Luzzatto's reputation rests upon: (1) The style of his prose writings as well as of his poetical works; (2) his grammatical and linguistic works; (3) his writings on Biblical exegesis; and (4) his historical studies.

Throughout his life, Luzzatto took for his guide the words of La Bruyère: "He who in his composition pays attention only to the taste of his century, thinks more of his person than of his production. One should always strive for perfection. That justice which contemporaries deny will then be granted by posterity."<sup>1</sup> With these in mind, he went forth to battle with the Middle-Age Hebrew which was still in use. In this he rendered modern Hebrew a great service. By nature a poet, he sought to introduce form into the Hebrew prose of his day. All his writings are marked by a thorough appreciation of sentence-form. Few could "be compared to Luzzatto in the ability to penetrate into the shrine of the Hebrew language; before him lay open its secrets and the beauty of force . . . he soared high, and elevated our souls by the beauty of his explanations and the pleasantness of his poems."<sup>2</sup>

As a grammarian and linguist Luzzatto had no equal among his contemporaries. His knowledge was drawn from a close study of the Masorah, of the Jewish grammarians and exegetes, of the Talmud, the Targumim, and other sources. He paid particular attention to the study of roots and derivatives, their generic and applied meaning; also to word usage, especially the use of synonyms. In his study of the latter<sup>3</sup> he was assisted by a similar study of Wessely,<sup>4</sup> but pushed his investigation much further than Wessely had done. By the nice distinctions he drew, he showed Hebrew writers how they might perfect modern Hebrew.

Luzzatto's chief grammatical works are: "Prolegomeni ad una Grammatica della Lingua Ebraica"<sup>5</sup> (Padua, 1836); "Grammatica

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, *ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> D. KAUFMANN in the introduction to his letters; WEISS, *Zikronotai*, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> *Bikkure ha-'Ittim*, vi. 25; vii., 147, 151; viii., 86, 141, 149, 154; ix., 82. *Kerem Hemed*, ii. 162. *Bet ha-Ozar*, ii., Przemyśl, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> GEIGER's *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben*, iv. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Translated by S. MORAIS in the *Proceedings of the Jewish Theological Seminary Association of New York*, vol. v.

della Lingua Ebraica" (Padua, 1853-4); and "Ma'amer Biyesode ha-Dikduk" ("Elementi Grammaticali del Caldeo Biblico"), 1865.<sup>1</sup> Not only are his grammatical and linguistic contributions to be found in the works just cited, but throughout his writings are scattered suggestions and notes invaluable for the study of Hebrew.

Luzzatto was one of the first to draw the attention of scholars to the necessity of being acquainted with the grammatical constructions of the Aramaic portions of the Bible and the Targumim. His Aramaic studies led him to pay special attention to the Targum Onkelos, the result of which was the "Oheb Ger" (*Philoxenus*). The "Oheb Ger" was a study of the text and methods of Onkelos, and an attempt to correct some of the errors that had crept in through the carelessness of copyists. In the "Oheb Ger," Luzzatto followed the idea of Dei Rossi,<sup>2</sup> that, despite the fact that in both Talmuds and in the Midrashic literature the same stories circulated about Onkelos and Aquila, the two were separate individuals. Rapoport attacked Luzzatto for accepting this view, and argued that there was no historical personage by the name of Onkelos, but that when the need of an Aramaic translation of the Bible was felt, Aquila's Greek version, which had found favor with the Babylonian doctors, was by them retranslated into Aramaic. In the change from Greece to Babylonia, "Aquila" became "Onkelos"—a mere phonetic change. Luzzatto afterward discarded his theory and accepted that advanced by Rapoport.<sup>4</sup>

Luzzatto's work in the Chaldaic grammar has a certain worth, in that it was the first attempt to write a grammar for the Aramaic idiom of the Babylonian Talmud. But his grammatical writings lack depth, because Luzzatto did not possess a knowledge of all the Semitic languages. This often makes his grammatical work one-sided.

The keynote of all Luzzatto's work, and of his Biblical criticism in particular, is sounded in the words of a letter written by him<sup>3</sup> to Rapoport on the occasion of the latter's seventieth birthday: "Truly thou knowest that every nation dwelling within certain definite

<sup>1</sup> Translated into English by J. S. GOLDAMMER, New York, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Vienna, 1830. Luzzatto may be playing both on the name of his son, Philoxenus, and upon the name "Onkelos ha-Ger" (Onkelos the proselyte).

<sup>3</sup> *Me'or 'Enayim*, chap. xlv.

<sup>4</sup> BERNFELD, *Toledot Shir*, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of Luzzatto*, p. 370.

boundaries may exist without faith. Israel, scattered to the four corners of the earth, has existed to this day only by virtue of strict adherence to its faith. Should Israel cease to believe that the Law is divine, it must cease to be a people. The name of Israel will then no longer be remembered, but, like all small streams, it will eventually be engulfed in the great sea."

Luzzatto deprecated anything that tended toward a fusion between the Jew and his Christian neighbor; and he opposed the emancipation of the Jew, lest by it Israel should lose its individuality and identity. The same dread manifests itself throughout the greatest part of his commentaries. He wanted to save Israel; to rebuild, not to destroy it. Every suggestion that tended to infringe upon Israel's identity he abhorred and religiously avoided. This abhorrence drew a sharp line of demarcation between him and the German Biblical school. "I hate modern German criticism," said he,<sup>1</sup> "yet I love the true critic. The difference between their views and mine springs from this, namely, that their investigation is not born within them, but comes from without; therefore they place no limit to their denial. My investigation has come from out of the Bible, and the love of truth is its foundation. Wherefore, all the spirits of the world could not move me from my faith." Luzzatto's chief studies on the Bible and on Judaism are: "Mishthaddel," a fragmentary commentary on the Pentateuch, Vienna, 1847; a commentary on the Pentateuch, Padua, 1871-76; another on Isaiah, 1857-67; "Perushe Shedal," a commentary on Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Proverbs, and Job, Lemberg, 1876; "Yesode ha-Torah"<sup>2</sup> (Elements of the Law), Przemyśl, 1880; "Il Giudaismo illustrato" (vol. i., Padua, 1848; vol. ii., *ibid.*, 1852), and a translation of the greater part of the Bible in "La Sacra Bibbia volgarizzata da S. D. L.," Rovigo, 1866-75.

In his Biblical criticism, Luzzatto's aim was to be like Rashi and Rashbam (Samuel ben Meir, a grandson of Rashi), simple and direct without perplexing his readers.<sup>3</sup> "I write my words with the

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Luzzatto*, p. 698; WEISS, *ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Luzzatto began in 1841, a translation of the *Yesode ha-Torah* to be published in the *Giudaismo illustrato* (part ii.), which was, however, withheld by the censor. It was partially published in Italian in *Educatore Israeleita*, 1853; cf. *Yesode ha-Torah*, edited by EISIG GRABER, p. 5, Lemberg, 1880.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters*, p. 157.

triteness and brevity of Rashi and those ancient Jews of whose fountain I drank and continue to drink." <sup>1</sup>

In criticism, unfortunately, Luzzatto's religious training would not allow him to go beyond certain limits. He had begun his critical career boldly; but timidity and the uncertainty whither his skepticism would lead him made him retrace his steps. When twenty-one years old, he had passed <sup>2</sup> judgment on Ecclesiastes, which book he regarded as not having been written by Solomon. Its author may have been an alien; for its theme is entirely non-Jewish. In order to gain for it admittance into the Canon, changes and additions were necessary to tone down its pessimism. In these changes and additions were to be seen the hands of the later compilers. Had Luzzatto continued to be skeptical in like measure with reference to the other Biblical books, he would have wrought a great benefit for the Bible; for there was no other scholar of his day with such capabilities for this particular work.

Herein lies Luzzatto's inconsistency. The method he employed for Ecclesiastes he rejects when commenting on the rest of the Scriptures. Hence, he sees in no portion of the Bible traces of Maccabean influence. The suggestion that a second Isaiah existed—first propounded by Ibn Ezra and supported by Krochmal and Rapoport—he repudiates. The entire Book of Isaiah was written by the same hand; chapters xl. to the end, instead of being descriptive of past events, he considered to be prophetic revelations of the future. Luzzatto firmly believed that the Pentateuch was a unit, dating from the time of Moses.

The importance of Luzzatto's criticism does not lie in these views, but in the method of his dealing with the text. His attention had been directed <sup>3</sup> to the text of the Bible in his study at school; and in Jewish literature he found repeated references to the antiquity of the vocalization and accentuation of the Bible, the gist of which was that though the text was read as we have it now, the systems of vowel-points and accents did not exist in the time of the Talmud.

With this as a starting-point, Luzzatto reared his system of textual emendation. Error could have crept into the text during the change from the ancient to the square characters, and also through the carelessness of scribes. The extent of the errors in the text

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 756.

<sup>2</sup> *Ozar Nehmad*, iv. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 61.

'differed in various portions of the Bible.' Owing to the jealous care with which the Pentateuch had been surrounded throughout the ages, error could not have crept into the text of those books; but the rest of the Scriptures had not been so carefully guarded, and there error could easily have found an entrance. In no place, however, was it wrong to change either accents or vowel-points.<sup>1</sup> The changes that Luzzatto suggested in the text prove that he was not dogmatic in his criticism. So excellent were many of his emendations, which he was the first to offer, that he had the good fortune to see many of them accepted by scholars during his lifetime.

Though his work at the college was devoted mainly to a study of linguistics and of the Bible, it did not claim all his attention. Luzzatto was the greatest Hebrew scholar in Italy; and his library was stored with the richest historical treasures. Of these, numbers of scholars, by the kindness of Luzzatto, availed themselves freely, and many of the most prominent members of the Jewish Historico-Critical School received from this source most valuable help. Much of the information in Zunz's histories of the synagogue poetry was obtained from Luzzatto; and Zunz acknowledges this debt in the introduction to his "Literaturgeschichte."<sup>2</sup> How extensive was the direct assistance to scholars given by Luzzatto in this way can never be known.

Urged by numerous and repeated requests, Luzzatto resolved to undertake some historical research for himself, and to gather material for the study of the history and literature of the Jews in Spain and France during the Middle Ages, the documents for which he knew were to be sought for in Italy, whither the unfortunate Jews had carried them after the persecutions of the Inquisition. In 1840 he published the "Bethulat Bat Yehudah" (*Virgo filia Jehudah*, Prague, 1840), a collection of poems from a diwan of Judah ha-Levi, with preface and notes. In 1864 (Lyck) he edited an entire diwan—the manuscript of which he discovered—by the same author, with notes, emendations, and correct punctuation. In the knowledge of Jewish poetry in general Luzzatto excelled;<sup>3</sup> and in that of piyyuṭim, or synagogue poetry, he ranked close to Zunz.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, pp. 13, 172, 183; *Kerem Hemed*, iii. 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> See also ZUNZ, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* (1845), p. 5; STEINSCHNEIDER, *Bibliographisches Handbuch*, p. xxxi., Leipsic, 1859; idem, *Catalogus Librorum hebræorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, p. xliv.

<sup>4</sup> *Aḥiasaf*, 1900, p. 337.

Throughout the latter part of his life Luzzatto published frequently, either in the periodicals or in book-form, historical data from which "the history of the Middle Ages received its authentication, its firm basis, its coloring, and its exposition."<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

### LEOPOLD ZUNZ

OF the little band of Jewish scholars in Germany, the one whose erudition was the widest, whose constructive power and consequent influence were the greatest, was Lipman Yom-Tob Zunz, or, as better known, Leopold Zunz. To a certain extent his name has become synonymous with the whole movement. Rapoport alone may be considered his equal in critical acumen, but was far behind him in the breadth of his view and in his faculty of presentation. Written in German, with much warmth and with literary ability,—despite what the late Paul de Lagarde had to say on this subject,—his works have certainly exercised a greater influence than those of any of his coworkers.

For him tradition is reliable only in so far as it can be shown to be trustworthy and in accord with historical data. A science of Jewish history must be built up in a logical manner, if the reproach is to be completely taken away from the Jews. "If there be an ascending scale of affliction," he wrote, "Israel has reached its highest grade. If the duration of pain, and the patience with which that pain is borne ennoble, the Jew may vie with the nobility of all nations. If a literature which possesses few classical tragedies shall be considered rich, what recognition should be given to a tragedy which was composed during fifteen centuries and presented by the heroes themselves?"<sup>2</sup> "If men recognize that Israel has a history, a philosophy, and a poetic literature, like other nations, they will grant the Jew the right of mental and spiritual equality . . . Mutual understanding and good-fellowship will follow. The admission of the claims of Israel's science and literature will result in a concession of equality of rights to Jews in practical life."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GRAETZ, *Geschichte der Juden*, xi. 502; English translation, v. 625.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Synagogale Poesie*, p. 9, Berlin, 1855.

<sup>3</sup> *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, 1845, p. 21.



Zunz did not, like Krochmal, turn his thoughts to transcendental speculation. Philosophy, whether religious or purely ethical, was not his chosen field of work. Like Rapoport, he contented himself with the critical study of history. He never wrote a complete account of his people, though it was his intention to do so.<sup>1</sup> Upon the appearance of Jost's history of the Jews, which anticipated the work Zunz had hoped to do, Zunz gave up the idea of writing a history of Israel and applied himself to special studies, the foundation-stones upon which a perfect history of Israel should at some future time be reared. He presented to scholars exhaustive studies of many phases of that history; by numerous articles and countless notes he directed the study of most if not all of its departments. Zunz's importance lies in the complete revolution that his articles and books wrought in the study of Jewish history. Without his books at hand, no student of Jewish history and literature may proceed.

Zunz, who was descended from an old and honorable family that had early settled in the region of the Rhine, near Frankfort, was born at Detmold, in the principality of Lippe, Germany, August 10, 1794;<sup>2</sup> died 1886. Among his ancestors were many rabbis and men well informed in Hebrew letters.<sup>3</sup> At the death of his father, in 1802, Leopold was sent to Wolfenbüttel to attend the free Talmud Torah, later transformed into the Samson Free School. Here he met his colleague, the later historian, Isaac Marcus Jost. The two boys immediately became warm friends. In a squalid and uncongenial atmosphere, surrounded by strangers, instructed by a master who knew little more than these his pupils, they confided to each other their dreams; painting bright visions of Israel's future, and evoking plans by which Jewish learning should be more generally cultivated. By hard work, diligence, and fortitude, they accomplished more outside than inside the class-room. The institute was by no means a model one.<sup>4</sup> In order to have light, by means of which they could devote part of the night to study, the two boys carefully collected the drip-

<sup>1</sup> STEINSCHNEIDER, in the Introduction to the second edition of the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1892, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> The name "Zunz" as Zunz himself averred, is derived from a town in the Rhine provinces; possibly from Zonz bei Neuss (*Monatsschrift für Geschichte des Judenthums*, xxxviii. 494, note 4).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 482, 483, 495; RABINOWITZ, *Life of Zunz*, p. 20, Warsaw, 1896; CHOTZNER, *Ot Zikkaron*, p. 1, Berlin, 1891.

<sup>4</sup> ZIRNDORF, *Jost und seine Freunde*, pp. 96 et seq.

pings from the wax "Jahrzeit" lights which mourners placed in the synagogue, and fashioned them into candles.<sup>1</sup> Together they studied Talmud, pored over the contents of the "Yosippon,"<sup>2</sup> and read Greek and Latin.

While yet in the institute, Zunz gave evidence of a marvelous memory, of phenomenal critical insight, of exceptional wit, of exactness in study, and of a habit of carefully collecting and arranging his notes for future use. From the Samson School, he went to the gymnasium at Wolfenbüttel,—the first Jew in Germany to enter a higher institute. Thence in 1815 he went to the University of Berlin. From now on till his death, with but few exceptions, he was a resident of Berlin. At the University he pursued courses under Schleiermacher, De Wette, Friedrich August Wolf, August Boeckh, and Savigny. Having no source of income, he had to work hard to defray his expenses. At one time (November, 1815, to March, 1818) we find him an inmate of the household of Henrietta Herz—probably as tutor.<sup>3</sup> Again he is found officiating in a private synagogue erected in Berlin by J. H. Beer. His career as a clergyman, however, was brought to a sudden close by a royal edict forbidding sermons or services to be delivered or held in the vernacular. A volume of his sermons, published in 1823 (2d ed., 1846), shows that the scholar had a fervent religious mind; these sermons are among the best preached in the synagogue at a time when the use of the vernacular for such purposes was only commencing to be felt in the Synagogue.

The ministry, however, was not entirely to Zunz's liking.<sup>4</sup> He saw it brought him no nearer his goal, and gave him no scope for the work he desired to do.

By nature Zunz was very versatile, and when the ministry was no longer attractive, he became a journalist. The initial steps in this career had been taken in 1819 by the organization of the "Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden." Assisted by an enthusiastic

<sup>1</sup> RABBINOWITZ, l. c., p. 23; KARPELES, *Jewish Literature and Other Essays*, p. 321, Philadelphia, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> A popular history of the Second Temple, compiled from an Arabic translation of the Book of Maccabees and a Latin translation of Josephus.

<sup>3</sup> S. MAYBAUM, *Aus dem Leben von L. Zunz* (Zwölfter Bericht über die Lehranstalt f. d. Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin), p. 3, Berlin, 1894.

<sup>4</sup> After 1822, except for a few months in 1835 spent as preacher in Prague, Zunz had nothing to do with ministerial duties.

band called "Young Israel," in which were notably Edward Ganz, Moses Moser, and later, Heinrich Heine and Emanuel Wolf, Zunz was foremost among those who were attempting to so remodel Jewish religious practise as to make it harmonize with modern life. His object was reform; not only reform in the Temple service, but reform in the social status of the Jew. By a systematic training of the young, through the founding of schools, colleges, and seminaries, he hoped to dispel ignorance and to open for the Jew entrance to all occupations. Greater toleration, he believed, would thus result; and toleration being once established, emancipation must follow. To accomplish all this, an organ for propaganda was needed. In 1822, edited by Zunz, the "Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums"<sup>1</sup> appeared.

The ideals of the organization were too high and somewhat in advance of the times. After its third number the issue of the periodical ceased, the "Verein" being disbanded. Zunz's disappointment at the failure of his project was keen. "I am so disheartened that I can nevermore believe in Jewish reform . . . many a change of season will pass over this generation and leave it unchanged . . . The only imperishable possession rescued from this deluge is the science of Judaism. It lives, even though not a finger has been raised in its service since hundreds of years. I confess that, barring submission to the judgment of God, I find solace only in the cultivation of the science of Judaism."<sup>2</sup>

After the failure of his first attempt at journalism, Zunz became, in January, 1824, editor of the "Spenerschen Zeitung in Berlin."<sup>3</sup> For eight years he was at the head of this journal. In December, 1832, because of the political position taken by the "Zeitung," Zunz resigned his position as editor.

In politics Zunz took an active interest; for he saw therein the means of furthering the emancipation of the Jew. He sided with a liberal form of government, which was more in keeping with the hopes he entertained for Israel's future in Germany. In united Germany he foresaw the regeneration of German Judaism. In the troublesome times of the forties and sixties he delivered many stirring

<sup>1</sup> Most of the articles were written by Zunz.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by KARPELES, *l. c.*, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> S. MAYBAUM, *Aus dem Leben von L. Zunz*, p. 12.

orations.<sup>1</sup> In 1845, in recognition of his merit, the Government appointed him a member of a commission to devise measures for the improvement of the educational and the political condition of the Jews in Prussia. In 1861 he was nominated member of the Reichstag.<sup>2</sup> Frequently Zunz was called to the Empress Augusta, who sought his counsel on social and charitable questions.<sup>3</sup> His value was also appreciated by foreign governments. At one time he was approached by a representative of the Russian Government for the purpose of ascertaining whether he would accept a civil office or professorship in Russia.<sup>4</sup>

From 1839 till 1849 he was principal of the Jewish seminary in Berlin; and from the latter year till his death in 1886, he received a stipend from the Jewish community.

The clergy, journalism, and politics throw much light upon the many sides of his character, and indicate the diversity of his interests. By these he was brought into public notice. But not for his work in any of these fields will his name be handed down to posterity: his historical studies are his living monument.

His first publication was a small article, "Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur" (1818).<sup>5</sup> This article shows a thorough grasp of the subject for one so young. He rebukes those who, without sufficient knowledge of Jewish literature, assume that the Jews throughout the past have had only a theological literature. Religion always interested the Jews, but not exclusively. They were at all times interested in other branches of education. They produced mathematicians, philosophers, poets, grammarians, jurists, etc. "Thank God!" exclaims Zunz, "times are changed. Keen and faithful writers now spread truth and enlightenment."<sup>6</sup> He points out to scholars along what lines a thorough criticism and an exact study of Jewish history and literature must be constructed. The article contains the germ, and in a measure is the condensed form, of all the departments that engaged the attention of Jewish scholars during the rest of the century.<sup>7</sup>

Soon after the appearance of this essay, Zunz tried his strength at

<sup>1</sup> These are to be found in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1875.

<sup>2</sup> RABBINOWITZ, *Life of Zunz*, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>4</sup> *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, 1895, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften*, i. 1-31.

<sup>6</sup> *Etwas über d. rabb. Literatur*, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> WEISS, *Zikronotai*, p. 132; *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April, 1895, vii. 366.

historico-geographical and biographical themes. In the short-lived "Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums" (p. 114) appeared: (1) "The Names of the Cities of Spain mentioned in Jewish Literature"; (2) sketch of the life of Rabbi Solomon Yizhaki (Rashi)<sup>1</sup> (p. 277). The first of these, when compared with his later works, appears somewhat uninteresting; but it evidences that thorough scholarship which characterizes all of Zunz's later works.

More interesting than his article on the cities of Spain is his life of Rashi.<sup>2</sup> It was the first critical attempt of any student to present biographical material. Zunz treats not only of the life of Rashi, but of his commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud, his epigrammatic style, his ideas, and his sources. He includes the works of Rashi's pupils, who followed the lines laid down by their master. He is not satisfied with merely giving the names of those he has occasion to mention, but gives biographical data of all, and frequently enters into lengthy discussions concerning many of them. This life of Rashi still remains a classic.

Ten years of hard study passed between the appearance of the life of Rashi and Zunz's next publication. During these years Zunz was by no means inactive. He traveled, visited libraries in search of treasures, and collected material. In 1832 appeared his greatest work, "Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt." Zunz had been convinced that the future of German Judaism lay, to a very great extent, in the hands of the Government. By the machinations of the anti-Reform party, certain changes necessary for the spiritual welfare of the Jews had been interdicted. As has already been mentioned, freedom of religious service, innovations which the times demanded, had been checked. Zunz felt that the sermon, if properly presented, was the only means of withholding many weak-minded people from apostasy. Let politics but be removed from the Jewish question, let legislation be divested of hatred and partizan antipathies, and Israel would be saved. "At last it is time that the Jews in Europe, especially in Germany, should be given, not rights and liberties, but right and liberty."<sup>3</sup> Civil disabilities account for the stagnation of Jewish learning and

<sup>1</sup> Rashi (1040-1105), commentator of the Bible and the Talmud.

<sup>2</sup> Translated into Hebrew by S. Bloch, Lemberg, 1840.

<sup>3</sup> *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, 2d ed, p. v.

culture. In past ages Judaism had been kept intact by the purity and freedom of its service, of which the homily was the chief feature. The very same exigencies were felt as formerly. Free and instructive homilies alone would insure German Judaism a bright future. The Government was not sufficiently informed concerning Israel's past to know what was innovation.<sup>1</sup>

Wherefore Zunz determined to show the civil authorities that sermons and services in the vernacular were not innovations, but that whenever and wherever the need was felt, the Jew prayed and listened to sermons in the vernacular. Zunz gave a general outline of Jewish history, and showed that the lecture or sermon had lived throughout the centuries from Ezra till modern times. "From ancient days we find that means have been found in the Jewish community, by which those weighed down by daily care, or bound by error and temptation, may be brought back to God. On Sabbath and festivals, on holy convocation, prayer was offered and the Scriptures elucidated, as a solace to the sinner, a support to the weak . . . In the course of time the Jew had lost independence and fatherland. Notwithstanding the dissolution of all other institutions, the synagogue remained the only testimony of Israel's nationality . . . The service in the synagogue was the rallying-point of Jewish nationality, the shelter of the Jewish faith.

"Prayer was offered in the synagogue for which every time and every language was suitable."<sup>2</sup>

The "*Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*"<sup>3</sup> was epoch-making. It was the first thorough and scientific attempt to unravel and present in good form the entire fabric of the Midrashic or homiletic literature. In this single volume is condensed material which might have been expanded into several. The author has charged his sentences and notes to their full capacity. For this reason, he never published a second edition<sup>4</sup> of this work. He recognized that in a second edition the material he had compressed between two covers would have to be reworked, and that, if properly done, it would have to be developed into many volumes. This he refused to do.

It is surprising what a wealth of new data the "G. V." contained.

<sup>1</sup> *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, pp. v.-viii.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.    <sup>3</sup> Abbr. "G. V."

<sup>4</sup> A second edition was edited in Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1892, by M. BRÜLL with an introduction by STEINSCHNEIDER.

In it the full extent of Zunz's information was shown. By the flood of new data presented, by fixing dates of the Midrashic works and of Jewish authors, it stimulated students to continue the investigations of the author. The copious notes appended to the "G. V." have in themselves given rise to an extensive literature; for these notes were later developed by others in numerous volumes and articles. The work "afforded material help toward the comprehension of the evolution of culture among the Jews at successive periods, and may claim to have established the principles upon which Jewish history should be based."<sup>1</sup> Despite some errors in detail which more recent research has brought to light, the book, after seventy years, still remains the authority.

Not alone in the "G. V." did Zunz lay the foundation-stones of Jewish history. From now on, one work after another appeared,—works which are invaluable for a thorough comprehension of such a study, and without due consideration of which no complete history of the Jews is possible. After his defense of the sermon, he turned his attention to another practical question. "Jewish and Christian names [*Vornahmen*] were spoken of as if they were two incompatible elements."<sup>2</sup> The cause of his writing the little pamphlet "Namen der Juden"<sup>3</sup> was the action of the Government in forbidding the Jews of Germany to use Germanized names.<sup>4</sup> "The attention given to Jewish names arises, on the one hand, from a desire to find therein a subject for reproach; on the other, as a pretext to restrict the rights of the Jew."<sup>5</sup> The Jews appealed to Zunz. In order the more forcibly to present his plea, he investigated the origin, the derivation, and the meaning of names borne by Jews: for "names contain a secret history; they are histories in cipher to which investigation offers the key."

Zunz showed that error or imitation of neighbors determined the choice of names, and that from very early times the Jew had been accustomed to drop the old and more Biblical names, in order to adopt new ones: he always bore the same names as did the Christian and the heathen. Zunz ridiculed the proposition to deprive the Jew of the right of using any name. Long before any of the German

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Zikronotai*, p. 135; *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April, 1895, vii. 370.

<sup>2</sup> *Namen der Juden*, Leipsic, 1837; republished in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 1-82.

<sup>3</sup> December, 1836.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

states existed the Jews had borne German names. So well was the task done by Zunz that the Jewish community presented him with a substantial sum in recognition<sup>1</sup> of his labors.

The desire to benefit a certain class of Jews to whom Hebrew was unknown next seized hold of Zunz. There were many who could not read the Bible in the original. Translations, it is true, were not wanting; but these were, in the main, antiquated, or could not be used because religious ideas foreign to them had been introduced into the text. The Mendelssohnian Bible in its day had served a good purpose; but it had been confined to certain portions of the Scriptures, it was expensive, and the language was obsolete. Zunz feared that the use of translations published by missionary societies might cause havoc in the Jewish home. To obviate all difficulties the "Zunzische Bibel" was published (1837-38). Its aim was to render the Hebrew into pure German without losing clearness, force, or elegance, and without perverting the context. Associated with Zunz were Michael Zachs, Julius Fürst, and H. Arnheim. The translation of the two books of Chronicles was left to Zunz. It is surprising that so little of the translation was done by Zunz: the Chronicles are by no means the important books of the Old Testament. The new Bible contained all of Mendelssohn's translation in a revised form and, added thereto, the Prophets and the Hagiographa.

Besides translating and editing the Bible, Zunz was interested in Biblical criticism. The second chapter of the "G. V." treats of "Dibre hajamim oder die Bücher der Chronik" (the chroniclers of the Bible). The material therein is gathered from Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, the Psalms, and the two books of Chronicles. From the contents of these books Zunz indicated that their date of composition could not have been that generally alleged. His attitude toward Pentateuchal criticism, however, was withheld until he was quite old. In 1873-74 he published a lengthy article styled "Bibelkritisches"<sup>2</sup> in which he ventured to give his ideas relative to the date, the nature, and the composition of the Pentateuch, Ezekiel, and Esther. Deuteronomy he compared with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Esther. Some parts of Deuteronomy, such as Moses' Blessing, he grants are old—

<sup>1</sup> RABBINOWITZ, *Life of Zunz*, p. 134; CHOTZNER, *Ot Zikkaron*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften*, i. 217-270. Part of the article appeared in *Z. D. M. G.*, xxvii. 669-689.



older even than Isaiah.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, Deuteronomy is a very late book. His view regarding Ezekiel, whom he considers the last of the Prophets, coincides with the tradition that Ezekiel was one of the men of the Great Synod.<sup>2</sup> Leviticus he compares with Ezekiel, and shows that the phraseology of the former echoes the latter. "At the time of the composition of Leviticus, the Israelites had been out of Palestine for a long time,"<sup>3</sup> and its date was a thousand years later than Moses.<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy knows nothing of Succoth, of the Feast of the Trumpet, of the Atonement Day, of a high priest and the various sacrifices.<sup>5</sup> New Year's Day, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Haman were unknown to the ancient Jews, and are due to later and foreign influence.<sup>6</sup>

The object of Exodus and Numbers is not to write history, but to rework old proverbs and traditions.<sup>7</sup> "The eighty-eight chapters between Moses' song of triumph in Exodus and the last chapter of Numbers impress one as a codex collected by various hands and in various times, and compiled from poetic and historical works, from laws and priestly regulations. In this codex contradiction and repetition are as natural as gradual corrections and lack of connection. To us it is a conundrum. Therein is to be found as little truly Mosaic material as elsewhere in the Bible Davidic."<sup>8</sup>

Zunz's views of Genesis may be summed up in a few words. There are two series of writings or redactions in Genesis; one using the appellation "Elohim"; the other, YHWH. As to its date he says: "In fact, Genesis in more than one place shows that it was composed in the time of the Jewish kingdom, many centuries after the tribes had established themselves in Palestine."<sup>9</sup> "The author of Genesis, younger than Jacob's Blessing, is hardly older than the prophet Isaiah."<sup>10</sup> These views, in which Zunz was no doubt influenced by modern Christian Biblical criticism, were offered merely as scientific hypotheses, and were not meant to affect the life and the conduct of the people. He repudiated all attempts to return to Mosaism<sup>11</sup> and all reform whose object was solely to break away from the observance of Jewish tradition. Though a "severe Biblical critic, his scientific criticism had no connection with the living practise of re-

<sup>1</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften*, i. 226.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 242.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, p. 241, No. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, p. 242, No. 32.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, p. 245.

<sup>8</sup> *Idem*, p. 262.

<sup>9</sup> *Idem*, p. 267.

<sup>10</sup> *Idem*, p. 270.

<sup>11</sup> Compare his answer to Abbé Chiarini in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 296-298.

ligion, in which he did not deviate by so much as a hair's breadth from the customs of his people."<sup>1</sup>

His chief interest, however, was not centered in Biblical criticism. As a Jew and as a sincere critic he felt himself bound to give his opinions on Biblical questions. History was his main study. Though he frequently made excursions into other fields, as soon as he was able he was back in the historical domain.

In 1845 appeared his "*Zur Geschichte und Literatur.*" In these *Beiträge*, his object is primarily to show that Israel has a historical past and that great men and telling incidents were not wanting in that past; that like all other people Israel influenced, and in turn was influenced by, others. The chief excellence of the book lies in the new data brought forward relative to the Tosafists or Glossarists on the Talmud. Zunz dilates upon the great medieval authors, but especially upon those of France and Germany, who wrote ethical, grammatical, and Biblical treatises. The volume is not a history of the Jews nor one of Jewish literature, though it contains data that must be used in the composition of such histories. For the most part, it contains series of bibliographical and biographical notes arranged in alphabetical and chronological order.

The synagogue poetry was the next subject to which Zunz gave his attention. Having presented a history of the homily, he thought it advisable to trace the history of synagogue poetry: first, to instruct those ultra-Reform rabbis who, ignoring the historical value of this poetry, were making great furrows in the liturgy; secondly, because the "synagogue poetry may be called the companion of Jewish history";<sup>2</sup> and thirdly, because of its connection with the early Midrashic or homiletic literature. For, in its decay, the Midrash gave rise to the piyyut.<sup>3</sup>

The material was too vast to be condensed into one volume. The author, therefore, published in three volumes and a supplement all the material available. The first of the series was "*Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*" (1855), which was followed, in 1859, by the "*Ritus des synagogale Gottesdienstes*," in 1865 by "*Die Literatur-*

<sup>1</sup> WEISS, *Zikronotai*, p. 148; *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April, 1895, vii. 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie*, 1865, p. iii.

<sup>3</sup> The technical name for synagogue poetry. The writers of piyyutim were called "piyutanim," "payyetanim," and "poetanim."

geschichte der synagogalen Poesie," and in 1867 by a "Nachtrag zur Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie."<sup>1</sup>

Great uncertainty reigned in regard to the personality and the time of the many hundreds of poets. Very few had applied themselves to a study of synagogue poetry. Christians knew naught of it, and Jews were badly informed in regard thereto. Synagogue poets who had become famous were not remembered because they had written synagogue poetry, but for some other quality. Such had been great poets, rabbis, Talmudists, or martyrs. Carelessness and wilful falsehood had increased the chaos in which the poets lay. Poems were ascribed to the Prophets, the Kings, even to the Apostles. The same poem was frequently attributed to different authors.<sup>2</sup> The "Nishmat" was ascribed to Simon ben Shetah and to St. Peter; "Ahabah Rabbah," to the Apostles Paul and John. In Hebrew literature the question of authorship has always been a difficult one. Until recent times, it was not considered dishonorable to give an article or a poem circulation by affixing thereto the name of some famous man. Furthermore, there were numerous poems extant the names of whose authors were unknown.

Therefore, the work Zunz accomplished in the history of the synagogue poetry—gathered largely as it was from manuscript—is marvelous. By him was published for the first time material which could be found in no other book. Its value for the history of the Jews will be readily understood. Given the customs of any people within a certain period, one may easily arrive at the conditions of history in that period. Zunz has presented to scholars a history of the service in the synagogue, of the rise and flourish of the payyetanim, and of the gradual modification of the various forms of prayer and rituals, and has translated many of the piyyutim that have found their way into the rituals. In general, the payyetanim sang "to give to the service a polish, to the deeds of the fathers a stately abode, to the Midrash a pleasing garment, and to sentiment a holy expression."<sup>3</sup>

From a literary standpoint, Zunz divides the synagogue poets into two classes: the Spanish and the non-Spanish. "Those in Spain

<sup>1</sup> An index to the *Literaturgeschichte* was made by GESTETNER, *Mafteah ha-Piyyutim*, Berlin, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie*, 1865, pp. 4-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Synagogale Poesie*, p. 60.

were poets, hence synagogue poets, and were urged to tune their lyres by poetic endowment. In France, Germany, and elsewhere, they were merely celebrants who wrote verse because their calling and the exigencies of the time demanded it."<sup>1</sup>

Zunz's work has a wider circle of readers than that of Krochmal, Rapoport, Reggio, and much of Luzzatto's, because he wrote mainly in a modern language. He was, however, not unskilled in the use of Hebrew. He wrote several articles in Hebrew, of which the most important is the "Life of Azariah dei Rossi."<sup>2</sup> Had he not been master of Hebrew, the illustrious Krochmal would never have entrusted to him the task of editing the "Moreh Nebuke ha-Zeman."<sup>3</sup> When Zunz received the manuscript it was a shapeless mass. Zunz gave it form and order. Not satisfied with the mere reconstruction of the volume, he wrote an introduction in Hebrew, in which he mentions the difficulty of his task, criticizes the work before him, and divides it into its component parts.

After his seventieth year, Zunz no longer published voluminous works. His powers, however, were not yet spent: he was continually lecturing and writing. The last works of importance that he published after his seventieth year were the "Bibelkritisches" (1874), already referred to, and "Die Monatstage des Kalenderjahres: ein Andenken an Hingeschiedene," Berlin, 1872, in which he has recorded, and thus saved from oblivion, the names of many Jews and Christians who assisted the advance of Judaism.

The work Zunz has accomplished has been more or less severely criticized, but by none so bitterly as by Ludwig Techen<sup>4</sup> and his master, Prof. Paul de Lagarde.<sup>5</sup> In answer, Dr. A. Berliner,<sup>6</sup> and Prof. David Kaufmann<sup>7</sup> showed conclusively that prejudice and ignorance were at the basis of these criticisms. The only valid objections of Lagarde and Techen are, that Zunz might have arranged his material to better advantage and that his method of presentation might have been improved. For Zunz never described the manuscripts that he used, nor told whence he obtained them, neither did

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Kerem Hemed*, v. 131; with additions, vii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by ZUNZ, 1851.

<sup>4</sup> *Zwei Göttinger Machzorhandschriften*—doctor's dissertation, Göttingen, 1884.

<sup>5</sup> *Lipman Zunz und seine Verehere*, Göttingen, 1886.

<sup>6</sup> *Professor Paul de Lagarde, nach seiner Natur gezeichnet*, Berlin, 1887.

<sup>7</sup> *Paul de Lagarde's Jüdische Gelehrsamkeit*, Leipsic, 1887.

he indicate from what codex he took his poems.<sup>1</sup> The lack of <sup>a</sup> proper index made the use of his history of the synagogue poetry very laborious. This difficulty, however, has been obviated by Gestetner's index, already cited.

Another objection that has been urged against Zunz's work in general is that it is too fragmentary and overloaded with notes. Possibly, Zunz found it necessary to present his material in this fashion. Little was done in Jewish history in his days; and so much had to be accomplished before a complete and reliable history of the Jews could be written, that he may have felt himself compelled to condense his knowledge into notes, one heaped upon the other.

Whatever criticism may be advanced against errors of detail or of presentation, the greatness of Zunz will in no wise be diminished. In 1871, fifty years after he had received his degree of doctor of philosophy, the University of Halle presented him with the honorary degree of doctor. In testimony of the esteem in which Zunz was held, the "Curatorium der Zunz-Stiftung" published in 1874, on the anniversary of his eightieth birthday, in three volumes, a collection of his minor treatises (*Gesammelte Schriften*); and in 1884, in honor of his ninetieth birthday, a number of scholars published the Zunz "Jubelschrift."

By the depth of his scholarship and his many happy conjectures, Zunz brought to light a vast amount of new material, and taught others how to proceed. "With wonderful art and brevity, and by simply confining himself to the issues, he performed his task. He is the historian of his people; for he portrayed the dark days of its calendar."<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER VII

### ABRAHAM GEIGER

THE study of Jewish research in the nineteenth century would be incomplete without taking into consideration the work of Abraham Geiger. He was one of the most original thinkers and critics among the Jews that the century brought forth. As will be seen from the following pages, he was pre-eminently a religious reformer and Jewish theologian. It may, therefore, be doubted whether a place

<sup>1</sup> TECHEN, *ibid.*, pp. 17, 18; LAGARDE, *ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> KAUFMANN, *ibid.*, p. 20.

should be assigned to him in the Jewish Historico-Critical School. Though a theologian, he was, however, also a scholar, a critic, a student of Jewish history, and, above all, a historian of Jewish theology. For this reason he must be counted among those who have helped to build up the science of Judaism.

Geiger was born May 24, 1810, at Frankfort-on-the-Main, and died in Berlin, October 23, 1874. At the age of five, he is said to have commenced the study of the Bible, and at seven to have laid the foundation of his Talmudic studies.<sup>1</sup> In his eleventh year he was sent to the gymnasium. It is somewhat curious to notice that even at this very early age his studies seem to have rendered him skeptical. His doubts he carefully concealed; knowing that the avowal would inflict pain upon his father, a devout rabbi, who had been his early instructor. Skepticism had, however, taken such a hold of him that at the death of his father, two years later, he broke with traditional Judaism and refused to acknowledge the Talmud as an authority for conduct. In 1829 he went to the University of Heidelberg, which he soon afterward left for that of Bonn, in order to be under the instruction of Freytag, one of the ablest Oriental scholars of his day.

Because of his views, Geiger entertained grave doubts as to his success as a clergyman, and at one time thought of giving up the idea of entering the pulpit. Yet he saw that a period was at hand which would materially change Judaism in Germany, and that during the process of such change his services might be needed. In 1833, after much difficulty, he was elected rabbi of a congregation in Wiesbaden.

Geiger was by no means contented to preach his reforms to his congregation only: he desired a larger audience. For this reason he founded in 1835 the "*Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie*."<sup>2</sup> As the name implies, the journal was dedicated to scientific research in Jewish history and theology and to the discussion of problems of interest to the Jews of the day. It essayed to instruct the Jew and to develop his esthetic sensibilities. In the attempt to do this the journal had but three predecessors: the "*Ha-Measef*"<sup>3</sup> (The Gatherer), which was the earliest venture in Jewish periodical

<sup>1</sup> RABBINOWITZ, *Life of Zunz*, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Vols. i.-iv., Frankfort and Stuttgart, 1835-39; vols. v.-vi., Grünberg and Leipsic, 1842-47.

<sup>3</sup> Berlin, 1783-1790.

literature in Germany; the "Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums,"<sup>1</sup> edited by Zunz, which has already been mentioned; and the "Bikkure ha-Ittim"<sup>2</sup> (Fruits of the Season), the first Jewish periodical in Galicia. Later, Geiger edited the "Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben,"<sup>3</sup> which he also used to spread his ideas of reform, and to which, as well as to his earlier journal, the greatest Jewish savants of the age contributed.

In 1838 Geiger was called to Breslau as assistant to Rabbi Solomon Tiktin, the representative of ultra-orthodoxy in Posen. It was but natural that the opposing views of these two men should clash. The contest was watched with interest throughout Germany; for it signified the success or defeat of reform. All kinds of obstacles were placed before Geiger to keep him out of Breslau, even the Government being appealed to for assistance. At first it appeared that Geiger would be worsted; for, having been born in Frankfort and not being a citizen of Prussia, he could not officiate in Prussia until he had become naturalized. Naturalization required two years' residence. The greater part of these two years he spent in Berlin, where he met Zunz. Of his stay in Berlin and his intercourse with Zunz he wrote: "My stay in Berlin brought me much good: much I learned from Zunz. How fortunate I am that I have made him my companion and friend!"

Having become a citizen, Geiger returned to Breslau; and the conflict there was reopened with renewed vigor. In the end Tiktin was displaced, and reform won the day. Possessed of a wonderful flow of language and charm of address, Geiger became the idol of the hour. In 1863 he was called to Frankfort, his native city, where he remained till 1870, in which year he was called to Berlin. His long-cherished hope was at last realized. After many years of ceaseless and weary struggles, he was in Germany's greatest center, rabbi of one of the most important Jewish congregations, docent at the newly established Rabbinical "Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums," a leader in the reform movement, and a scholar recognized by his peers.

Geiger felt that the greatest impediment to the advance of Juda-

<sup>1</sup> 1822-23.

<sup>2</sup> Partly in German, partly in Hebrew; 12 vols., 1821-1831.

<sup>3</sup> Breslau, 1862-1874.

<sup>4</sup> *Nachgelassene Schriften*, v., letter 35, pp. 146-150. Owing to the radical views of Geiger, the two scholars later became estranged.

ism lay in the divergence of opinion among the rabbis. Each clergyman interpreted Judaism in accordance with his purely personal considerations. The future welfare of Israel demanded that these personal elements be removed. This could be accomplished only by the adoption of some general plan and the establishment of an authoritative body which should define the essence of Judaism. As early as 1837 he was active in bringing together such a body. In the influence he exerted on the later conference of Jewish rabbis, Geiger was one of the foremost workers for Reformed Judaism in Germany. "The healthy portion," he wrote,<sup>1</sup> "even if numerically small, will develop in time in its solidity and its harmony with the age; while the sickly and unsound portion will be swept away by the waves of the new era."

In his demands for reform Geiger went further than his immediate associates. It was his purpose to effect a distinct demarcation between Orthodoxy and reform. "The division between the two unlike parts must occur; and then, only then, can a new life be fostered by those susceptible of reform."<sup>2</sup> All observances to which reason entertained the slightest objection were to be abrogated. In the prayer-book which he edited in 1854, all prayers referring to certain customs, as the priestly blessings, the counting of the days between Passover and Pentecost, the blowing of the trumpet on New Year's Day, the shaking of the palm on Tabernacles, etc., were abolished. In order that his sincerity should not be doubted, and lest he should be charged with advocating a religion of convenience, he himself scrupulously observed every precept of traditional Talmudism.

Geiger's first attempt at composition was characteristic; and it shows how he made use of his knowledge of Hebrew literature to light up general Oriental themes. Toward the end of Geiger's university career, a prize was offered by the University of Bonn for the best thesis on the relation between Judaism and Mohammedanism. Geiger's thesis on this subject was the prize essay, and was published in 1833 under the title, "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen?"<sup>3</sup> This essay brought its author fame, and, notwith-

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Jacob Auerbach, April 18, 1842. *Nachgelassene Schriften*, v. 161. Cited in E. SCHREIBER, *Abraham Geiger*, 1892, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Nachgelassene Schriften*, v., letter 67, written to Wechsler in 1849.

<sup>3</sup> Translated into English by "a member of the Ladies' League in aid of the Delhi Mission," London, 1899.



standing the contributions since made to the subject by Wellhausen, Hirschfeld, and Grimme, it still remains the standard work. The reputation acquired by this book was enhanced by the publication of a collection of unprinted manuscripts, "Melo Hofnayyim"<sup>1</sup> (Two Handfuls), in Hebrew and German, Berlin, 1840, which was followed by the "Lehr- und Lesebuch zur Sprache der Mischna" (Breslau, 1845), of which the first part was a grammar, the second a reader and vocabulary. Much time had always been spent in making the Jewish youths acquainted with the difficulties of the Mishnaic language, but too little had been devoted to a systematic instruction in the development of the Bible Hebrew into the Hebrew of the Mishnah; so that the intricacies of this language proved too difficult for the student, or could be mastered only after repeated failures. Geiger's "Lehr- und Lesebuch" was the first attempt in the German language to introduce modern methods into the grammatical study of the Mishnah. By it many of the difficulties that the beginner encountered in his study of the Mishnah were simplified.

In 1853 Michael Zachs, then editor of the "Kerem Hemed," asked Geiger to contribute to his periodical. In response Geiger wrote an article entitled "Sheminit,"<sup>2</sup> which was revised and published in the "Parshandata" (1855-57), a treatise also partly in German, partly in Hebrew. The Hebrew portion is an edition of critical notes on Job by Saadia Gaon, quoted by the French exegetes in their commentaries, and of unpublished fragments of exegetical manuscripts found by Geiger in the Munich library; and the German is a succinct account of the work of the northern French school of exegetes.

The wide scholarship of Geiger is manifested in the variety of his works and in his ability to turn from one subject to another. From Islam he passed to the Mishnah; from the Mishnah to the exegetes; and from the exegetes to the poets; for in 1851 he translated some of the poems of Judah ha-Levi (b. 1085), to which were added notes and a biography,<sup>3</sup> the whole serving as a fitting introduction to the great

<sup>1</sup> Containing a letter of Del Medigo to Serah ben Nathan; an introduction to the Tahkemoni; an astrological commentary of the *Sefer Yezira* by Sabbatai Donolo; a responsum of Rashi on Jeremiah; five responsa of Maimonides, etc. The German portion is to be found in *Gesammelte Schriften*, iii. 1-96, treating on Candia and the life of Joseph del Medigo.

<sup>2</sup> *Kerem Hemed*, 1853, pp. 41 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Published also in *Nachgelassene Schriften*, iii. 97-178.

Castilian Jewish poet. In 1856<sup>1</sup> he published "Zizim u-Ferahim" ("Jüdische Dichtungen der spanischen und italienischen Schule"), which contains a brief account of the greatest Jewish poets of Spain and Italy, with examples of their poems.<sup>2</sup> The last of this series of Geiger's was "Solomon Gabirol und seine Dichtungen" (1867). In these three works he brought home to the Jews the value of their great poets of the Middle Ages. By translating their poems, many of which are done into excellent German, he has interpreted the passions and the thoughts that aroused the Hebrew poet.

From the poets Geiger passed to his most important work, the critical study of Judaism. One part of this study treats of the Bible and is represented by the "Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der inneren Entwicklung des Judenthums" (1857); the second part, "Die Sadducäer und Pharisäer" (1863), deals with the history of these sects; and the third, "Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte" (3 vols., 1865-71), treats of the general development of Judaism.

The "Urschrift" embodies the results of a critical study of the Bible during a period of nearly twenty-five years.<sup>3</sup> Extensive Biblical research had been conducted by Christians and had been developed into what is now commonly styled the "higher criticism." It is beyond the province of the present thesis to criticize the labors of such Christian students as Eichhorn, De Wette, Gesenius, Vater, von Bohlen, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, and a host of others who lived and wrote in the latter part of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth. In many respects their work is entitled to generous praise. They effected a more rational criticism of the Bible, and exercised, even in certain sections of Judaism, considerable influence. But it must be said of them generally that, having been born outside the pale of Judaism, they were not able to make use of Jewish tradi-

<sup>1</sup> About the same time, Geiger was also studying the Jewish grammarians. In 1856-57 appeared the biographies of Joseph Kimhi (*Oẓar Neḥmad*, i. 977; ii. 98) and of his sons, David (*ibid.*, ii. 157) and Moses (*ibid.*, ii. 17). These biographies were republished by R. Kirchheim (Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1877) in the Hebrew part of vol. v. of Geiger's *Nachgelassene Schriften*. Geiger was the first to treat of the Kimhis, to give the meager details of their lives as they have come down to us, and to indicate the importance and influence of their works.

<sup>2</sup> In Hebrew and German. The German portion will be found in the *Nachgelassene Schriften*, iii. 224 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Preface to the *Urschrift*, v.

tion, nor could they control Jewish sources. Among Jews, however, there was always some hesitancy in criticizing the Bible; the Scriptures being regarded by them as spiritual food, too sacred to be handled except with veneration. Krochmal, Luzzatto, and Rapoport were reluctant to criticize the Bible; and Zunz never went deeply into Biblical investigation. Geiger was the first Jew of the modern school of research to cast aside all timidity and to approach to the higher criticism. In at least one respect Geiger's work is superior to that of Christian students: he was able to make use of Jewish sources; and he employed them to the fullest extent.

In the "Urschrift" Geiger attempts to ascertain what was the original text of the Scriptures, what was the condition of the Jews at the time of its compilation, and what was the relation of the versions to the original text. In this work the skepticism that had manifested itself in his early years broke forth anew in all its strength.

The "Urschrift" was certainly an epoch-making work. Geiger's criticism is ingenious; and his translations and combinations are exceedingly happy. His work has dominated Jewish thought to such an extent that it has fully justified the author's forecast: "If its [the "Urschrift's"] theories are established, then it has opened a new and secure road to the determination and the correct understanding of the Bible."<sup>1</sup> So thoroughgoing were Geiger's ideas on reform, and so incisive his criticism, that on the twentieth anniversary of his rabbinate the orthodox Luzzatto wrote: "May God in his goodness bless Abraham; may he crown his endeavors in behalf of science; and may he grant him long life to make good what he has destroyed."<sup>2</sup>

Having dealt fully with the Biblical material, Geiger next took up the study of a period of Jewish history that has had an important influence on the development of Judaism and that had always been obscure; namely, that of the conflicts between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. This had been treated to some extent in the "Urschrift." Geiger gives a vivid portrayal of the contests; and his style is clear and vigorous.

The most popular of Geiger's writings is his series of lectures on "Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte."<sup>3</sup> This is not an exhaustive

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> LUZZATTO, *Autobiography*, translated by M. GRÜNVALD, p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> In three parts: the first has been rendered into English by MAURICE MAYER, New York, 1886.

history of Judaism, but an outline of it; and it is characterized by the freedom and originality with which Geiger handled all his subjects. Originally, the lectures were not written with the view of being printed, but were intended for oral delivery, and to be, as he says in the preface, an honest presentation of the author's views; not for the purpose of insidiously opposing generally adopted opinions, but as the outgrowth of a desire to authenticate his convictions. Geiger defines Judah not merely as a people, but as the depositary of an idea; and he traces the development of this idea from its beginning.

In dealing with the origin of Christianity, he shows, more than in any other of his works, his characteristic boldness. His philosophic and poetic interpretation of the "logos" and "the only begotten Son of God" is clever, but daring as coming from a Jew. He knew that with zealots his views would have no weight, and was ready to receive their abuse. He even exulted in the thought that such abuse might be directed against him, yet at the same time he feared that the expression of his views might cause harm to the Jews.<sup>1</sup> "I alone and exclusively bear the responsibility of all I have said in the following lectures; how many or how few of my co-religionists share or approve my views, I know not. Hence I make exclusive claim to the entire honor of being attacked. My words must not afford a pretext for an accusation against Jews and Judaism."<sup>2</sup>

After Geiger's death five volumes of "*Nachgelassene Schriften*" were published by his son Ludwig, himself a student of Jewish history, especially in Germany.

To understand the influence of Geiger it must be remembered that he was pre-eminently a theologian in the modern sense of the term. In his capacity as docent at the Hochschule, opportunity was given him to disseminate his views through the Reform rabbis, who went thence to all parts of Europe and America. The theologian in him dominated the student and the critic, so that his theology can in no wise be separated from his works. His critical studies were written with the view not only of offering scientific hypotheses, but of fixing a standard of conduct for Israel. In this he differed from

<sup>1</sup> Part I., lecture ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte*, p. xii.; English translation by MAYER, p. vii.

Zunz. Both were liberal critics; both scrupulously observed the precepts of tradition, though from different motives; both sought to develop the esthetic side of Jewish life. They differed in the method pursued and in the extent of their criticism. Zunz, however much he doubted the validity of tradition, rejected all reform whose object was solely to break away from it. He regarded the time as not yet ripe for the abrogation of tradition. Let Israel be educated in the truths of Judaism, and its inner development will in time cast off the unnecessary. Let the advance be slow, so that there be no rupture within Israel; for history has shown how injurious to any cause division is. The future is more important than the present.

Geiger took an opposite course; for he was a man of action. The objectionable must be weeded out of the daily practise. At all hazards, schism must be brought about. Thus, Zunz and Geiger are two different types of the same school. One was the Conservative, the other the extreme Radical, of the German school of critics.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ZACHARIAS FRANKEL

HAVING considered two branches of the German school—the Conservative, of which Zunz was representative, and the Radical, of which Geiger was typical—we now come to a third branch, known, in contradistinction to the Reform party, as the “orthodox historical” school. The members of this school were not affiliated with the ultra-orthodox party, which opposed all critical investigation and which was represented by Samson Raphael Hirsch. They joined with Zunz and Geiger only in their support of the renaissance of Jewish historical studies.

The leader of this division was Zacharias Frankel, born in Prague, October 18, 1801; died in Breslau, February 13, 1875. Like all orthodox boys, he was instructed in Bible and Talmud; and for secular studies he went to the University at Pest. In 1832 he was chosen rabbi of the “Leitmeritzer Kreis,” and four years later was called to Dresden as chief rabbi. From this time Frankel’s was one of the most celebrated of Jewish names throughout Germany; for all his work was centered in the desire to do service to his people. He

directed his attention to what was one of the greatest impediments to emancipation. Of the many distinctions continually being made in daily life between Jew and Christian none was so humiliating as the special oath administered to Jews before giving testimony in court.<sup>1</sup> In 1840 Frankel laid before the Diet of Saxony an article entitled "Die Eidesleistung der Juden" (Dresden and Leipsic, 1840). This, together with a similar article, "Der gerichtliche Beweis nach mo-saisch-talmudischen Rechte" (Berlin, 1847), placed before the Prussian Diet of 1847, resulted in the abolition of the oath throughout Germany.

During his early years Frankel devoted a great deal of energy to bringing about the recognition of the Jewish religion on the part of the state. The abolition of the oath was one great step toward this recognition, and had Frankel done nothing else, his name would for this alone have been cherished in Israel. Frankel saw, however, that what the Jews needed was not so much the repeal of hostile legislation, and the increase of rights and privileges, as a reform within their own body—a spiritual and intellectual regeneration. This reform, he believed, had to commence with the leaders themselves. There was too little harmony among them as to the fundamental doctrines upon which modern Judaism was built. The only means of securing such harmony lay in the organization of some central body and the establishment of a theological seminary in which should be given methodical instruction in Jewish theology and literature.

This need was felt by others besides Frankel. Geiger was working for the same end, but, for a time, could interest but few in his project because those interested in the founding of a Jewish seminary doubted the expediency of having at its head a man with such thorough Reform principles. The propositions of Frankel met with a more immediate success. In 1854, owing to the good offices of Jonas Frankel, a seminary was founded in Breslau to which Zacharias Frankel was called as director, and Heinrich Graetz and Jacob Bernays as assistants. As head of this rabbinical seminary, Frankel's position was one of great importance not only in Breslau, but throughout Germany; for the only Jewish seminary then in existence was the one in Padua, founded in 1829. From Breslau went forth rabbis and

<sup>1</sup> On the literature concerning the "Moreh Judaico" see STEINSCHNEIDER in *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie*, i. 17 et seq.

teachers to all parts of the world, wherever Jews were congregated; and with them went the doctrines that Frankel had impressed upon them. In order to propagate his views and to arouse interest in his party, Frankel edited the "Zeitschrift für die religiösen Interessen des Judenthums" (Breslau, 1844-46) and the "Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums" (1851-1867), in both of which he wrote numerous articles.

Frankel was one of the greatest Talmudic authorities of his day. For him, the basis of Judaism was the Bible; and without the Torah Israel could not exist. Rapoport, another great Talmudist, though timid in Biblical criticism, did not hesitate to criticize the text of the Bible. Frankel objected not only to any change in the text, but also to any criticism that might lead to such a change. He was not in sympathy with the Rabbinism of the Middle Ages. He recognized that reform in certain things was necessary, and was willing to allow it a certain leeway. For this reason he attended the second conference of Reform rabbis, held at Frankfort in 1845. The extreme radicalism displayed there, however, forced him to retire; and he resolved never to attend these conferences again.

The life-work of Frankel was a scientific investigation of the Talmud and of the Halakah. Throughout the Middle Ages the Talmud—then the basis of all Jewish education—was more or less critically studied. Numerous commentaries had been composed, some lexicons had been written, and, since 1606, the Mishnah had been translated into Latin, Spanish, and German. Of the modern school of critics, Krochmal, Rapoport, Luzzatto, Geiger, and others had studied single phases of the Talmud; but they had not exhausted the subject. A comprehensive introduction to the Talmud and the halakic literature, according to the methods of the modern Jewish school of criticism, was still a desideratum. To supply this need was Frankel's endeavor. He sought to trace the development of the Halakah by a study of the Septuagint, the Mishnah, the Jerusalem Talmud,<sup>1</sup> and the Responsa literature.

Frankel's Talmudic studies led him to a careful survey of the Septuagint. He felt that with the close of prophecy in Israel the

<sup>1</sup> Frankel had hoped to publish an introduction to the Babylonian Talmud, but it never appeared. Preliminary studies of this subject, however, he published in the *Monatsschrift*, 1861, x. 186, 206, 258, under the title *Beiträge zu einer Einleitung in den Talmud*.

creative power of Judaism had not ceased. The prophet had but yielded place to the teacher. "There was no longer any need of dissuading the people from idolatry. Complete subservience to God and His law had filled the hearts of all Jews. This law, which was regarded as the noblest inheritance, had caused a new demand; namely, acquaintance with that law and instruction as to its execution . . . The time needed teachers, not prophets."<sup>1</sup>

The divine commands (Halakah) were carefully reviewed in order that the daily life of the people might be regulated in accordance with them. This activity resulted in the science of the Jewish religion.<sup>2</sup> Data of its origins in Palestine are lacking. In Alexandria, where there was a large Jewish colony, a greater religious activity and hermeneutic literature existed earlier than in Palestine. Of this literature the Septuagint was, as far as is known, the first production, and is, therefore, of the utmost importance for the study of the Bible. The greatest ignorance existed even as to the origin and the purpose of the Septuagint and its relation to the written and oral law. In three works, "Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta" (Leipsic, 1841), "Ueber den Einfluss des palästinensischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik" (Leipsic, 1851), and "Ueber palästinische und alexandrinische Schriftforschung" (Breslau, 1854), Frankel discussed the question of the Septuagint more exhaustively than it had ever been treated before.

These three works may be regarded as the preliminary investigations in his study of the Halakah; for the author was certain that there was a very close affinity between "Alexandrian hermeneutics," of which the Septuagint was the representative, and the "Palestinian exegesis" which developed into the Midrash and the Talmud. This connection had frequently been overlooked. He was also certain that the spirit that led to the compilation of the Talmud was to be found in the early versions, in Philo, and in Josephus. In other words, he showed conclusively that "those writings which had served as the basis for Christianity contained Talmudic elements." After his study of the Alexandrian hermeneutics he turned to the study of the Responsa literature, and published his "Entwurf eine Geschichte der Literatur der nachtalmudischen Responsa." The Responsa literature

<sup>1</sup> FRANKEL, *Ueber den Einfluss der palästinensischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik*, p. 1, Leipsic, 1851.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.



originated in the seventh century (soon after the close of the Talmud) and extends to the present day. "No field of human activity and human science was untouched by it."<sup>1</sup> These responsa, which are answers to questions addressed to the most noted men of every age, were the authorities for conduct. They are the continuation of the same spirit in Judaism that produced the early versions of the Bible, the Mishnah, and the Gemara. They explain difficult passages in the Talmud, and throw much light on its text as well as on the history of Jewish culture; interpreting the momentous questions of philosophy, religion, mathematics, and chronology of every age. Owing to the lack of proper histories, these responsa, which depict the conditions of many Jewish communities, must be used by the historian. There were myriads of them, but large numbers have been lost. The names of some of them, however, have been preserved in references in other books. Frankel in his "Entwurf" gives a historical sketch of these responsa, which, though not exhaustive, was at least the first of its kind, and treats of the times in which they were called forth, of their authors, of the language in which they were written, and of their authenticity.

From the Responsa literature Frankel turned to his most important productions, studies in the Talmud, which resulted in the publication of three separate works: (a) An introduction to the Jerusalem Talmud (Treatise in Hebrew in five parts, Breslau, 1870), treating of the conditions of the Jews in Palestine at the time of the compilation of the Talmud, the colloquial language of the Jews of that period, the Halakah and Haggadah, the chronology of the Amoraim (sages of the Gemara) and their methods, and of the commentaries to the Jerusalem Talmud; (b) an edition of parts of the Jerusalem Talmud;<sup>2</sup> and (c) "Darke ha-Mishnah" (*Hodegetica in Mishnam librosque cum ea conjunctos*, Leipsic, 1859).

This last work was the production for which Frankel was most vigorously attacked. It is also in five parts, and treats of the history of the Mishnah; its origin and development; of the chronology of the Tannaim (sages of the Mishnah) and of the religious and philosophic problems with which they had to deal; of the schools of Hillel

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to the *Entwurf*.

<sup>2</sup> Frankel had hoped to edit the entire Talmud, but only two parts appeared: vol. i., *Berakot* and *Pesahim*, Vienna, 1874; vol. ii., *Demai*, Breslau, 1875.

and Shammai, of the compilation of the Mishnah and its arrangement into subdivisions; of the principles and rules of the Mishnah. It critically surveys the Mishnaic literature; *i.e.*, such works as the "Mekilta," "Tosefta," etc., and the commentaries on the Mishnah. The part most seriously objected to was Frankel's explanation of the oral law, which, together with the written law, tradition claimed was given to Moses on Sinai.

This oral law was part of the *lex gentium*, which was not incorporated into the Scriptures, but was collected and found a resting-place in the Mishnah and Gemara. According to Frankel, the phrase "Halakot le-Mosheh mi-Sinai" (Laws Given to Moses on Sinai) must not be taken literally. By it were meant those precepts which were observed from time immemorial, whose origin none knew, but whose formulation may have dated from the discussions in the Great Synagogue. Because they were ancient, these Halakot were held as sacred as if they had been given to Moses on Sinai. For holding this view Frankel was rated as a blasphemer and an infidel, and was especially attacked by Samson Raphael Hirsch. Rapoport, in a pamphlet, "Dibre Shalom we-Emet," came to Frankel's assistance, and showed that this view was entirely in accord with orthodox principles.

In summing up Frankel's work it will be seen that his importance lies in his having brought into existence the orthodox historical school. He presented an introduction to the Jerusalem Talmud, to the Mishnah, and to the study of the Halakah, based upon modern methods of criticism. He showed that Talmudic tradition was unbroken, and that the same spirit that permeated the Bible may be traced in the Greek versions, in the works of Philo and Josephus, in the Talmud, and throughout the Responsa literature. As Zunz was greatest among those who treated of Haggadah, so, of all this modern school of critics, was Frankel greatest among those whose attention was claimed by the Halakah.

## CHAPTER IX

ISAAC MARCUS JOST

Of the entire historical school, the works of the historian Isaac Marcus Jost were, perhaps, the most severely criticized. However just such criticism may be, it must be acknowledged that Jost is most

completely allied with the resurrection of Jewish historical research in Germany.

Jost was born February 22, 1793, at Bernberg, Germany, and died November 20, 1860, in Frankfort-on-the-Main. Circumstances compelled him at a very early age to help maintain the family.<sup>1</sup> His first instruction he received in the Hebrew school at Bernberg, but on the death of his father, in 1803, he was sent to the Samson Free School, where he met Leopold Zunz. In 1811 he entered the Brunswick gymnasium, from which in 1813 he went to Göttingen, where he studied history, philology, theology, and philosophy. While at Göttingen Jost made the acquaintance of Israel Jacobson, a wealthy banker, who was attracted by the extent of Jost's capabilities. With him Jost went to Berlin, and through his kind assistance was enabled to be graduated from the University of Berlin.

Despite the requests and offers of Jacobson, Jost would not enter the ministry. After his graduation, he became an educator, first in Berlin—where he founded a school open to Jews and Christians alike—and later, from 1835 till his death, in Frankfort, where he was head master of the Jewish school.

When at the Samson institution, both Jost and Zunz had determined to write a history of the Jews; and they were continually collecting material for it. Zunz doubted the advisability of writing a history till its elementary studies had been completed, and sufficient data for an authentic history were forthcoming. This was characteristic of Zunz. He was no doubt right in his unwillingness to endanger his reputation by writing a work which, because of the absence of material, would be trustworthy only to a limited extent. Jost also must have felt the force of this objection; but he also saw the need of a history in German.

While Zunz hesitated and was engaged in special studies of Jewish history, Jost was working under great difficulties toward the completion of his task—the composition of a comprehensive history of the Jews.<sup>2</sup>

At all times, a history of the Jews is a most difficult subject to

<sup>1</sup> ZIRNDORF, *M. Jost und seine Freunde*, p. 94, Cincinnati, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of encouraging historical research he founded and edited the *Israelitische Annalen* (1839-41). He also edited in connection with Michael Creizenach the Hebrew periodical *Zion* (1840-41), in order to arouse interest in the Hebrew language.

compass; its extent is so great that very few men can do justice to such vast material, even when the necessary authentic data are at hand. And a history of the Jews includes not only a history of the national existence of Israel, but also a study of the influences under which Judaism developed.

With the Diaspora a new life began for Judaism, and the Jews were scattered over the world. In Asia, Africa, Europe, and later in America, individual communities developed their own history. These communities were united by a common danger and by the possession of like moral codes and religious traditions. The sum of the histories of these infinite numbers of communities forms a complete history of Judaism. The historian of the Jews must therefore not only be able to control the incidents of any and all of these sections in any given time, but he must also be intimately acquainted with the history of civilization in general and with the literary, political, social, and economic history of all the people in the midst of whom the Jews have dwelt. If the task be so difficult with the required material at hand, how much more arduous was it for Jost when knowledge was meager and records were faulty.

Before Jost but two noteworthy attempts at a history had been made, and both of these were by Christians. The first was <sup>1</sup> by a Protestant clergyman named Jacob Basnage (1653-1723); the second <sup>2</sup> by Hannah Adams, wife of a Boston clergyman. Basnage's History, the standard work in Christian and in some Jewish circles before Jost's work appeared, was fragmentary. Of it Graetz says: <sup>3</sup> "Despite his [Basnage's] efforts to be impartial and honest, he could not rid himself of the belief that the 'Jews are rejected because they have rejected Jesus.' Basnage's 'History of the Jews' has numerous faults. Hardly a single sentence can be regarded as perfectly just and in accordance with the truth."

The history by Hannah Adams was also fragmentary and very imperfect; for her training in Jewish history did not furnish her with the knowledge to do justice to her theme. Her "crude work,

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de la Religion des Juifs depuis Jésus Christ jusqu'à présent, pour servir de supplément et de continuation à l'histoire de Joseph*. Five vols., Rotterdam, 1707-1711.

<sup>2</sup> *The History of the Jews from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Present Time*. London, 1818.

<sup>3</sup> *Geschichte der Juden*, x. 317; English ed., v. 97.

nevertheless, was good enough for the purposes of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews, which, besides, made several alterations in the book in order to serve its ends. Fidelity to history and truth were entirely disregarded in the changes."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the work done before the appearance of Jost's "*Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsere Tage*" (9 vols. Berlin, 1820-29), which was followed by the "*Neuere Geschichte der Israeliten von 1815 bis 1845*" (3 vols. *ibid.*, 1846-47), and "*Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*" (3 vols., Leipsic, 1857-59).<sup>2</sup>

Jost's importance in the historico-critical school lies in the fact that he was the first to produce a comprehensive history of the Jews which might be used with some sense of safety and which was in accordance with modern critical methods. When Jost wrote his first history, the investigations of Rapoport, Zunz, and others had not yet been published. Jost was, therefore, compelled to explore; as Steinschneider said,<sup>3</sup> he had to resort to unreliable Christian sources which were not primary. The errors of his early work are due to the lack of better information, and represent the views of the learned of that time. His later works, especially the "*Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*," which was the first attempt to present a history of Judaism, shows marked improvement. But even in this work many of Jost's bad methods are discernible. He frequently makes blunders which he would never have made had he read his sources more carefully. For these blunders, he was bitterly attacked on all sides. "I hate, I despise Jost," wrote Luzzatto, "and as long as my soul and a pure heart are within me, this abhorrence shall not leave me. I hate him and ever will hate him, not for his thoughts, but for the words he has written."<sup>4</sup> In addition to showing frequent perversions of the truth, his works are unmistakably one-sided.<sup>5</sup> Granted,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, German ed., xi. 452; English ed., v. 593.

<sup>2</sup> An abridgment of this work appeared 1831-32 in two volumes under the title *Allgemeine Geschichte des israelitischen Volkes*.

<sup>3</sup> A good piece of work outside of the historical field was done by Jost in his translation of the Mishnah into German in Hebrew characters.

<sup>4</sup> *Bibliographisches Handwörterbuch für hebräische Sprachkunde*, p. xxxii., Leipsic, 1859.

<sup>5</sup> *Letter to Rapoport*, January 28, 1831; *Letters of Luzzatto*, Przemyśl, 1882, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, xi. 455; English ed., v. 595.

however, that Steinschneider is fully justified in saying<sup>1</sup> that "in the eyes of all critics Jost must be regarded as a shameless plagiarist, a dangerous inventor, and a literary perjurer," Jost's influence in historical studies was by no means unimportant. He was the first Jew to attempt a complete history; and his influence was felt by all his successors, both Jewish and Christian. His "Geschichte der Juden und seiner Sekten," which is his best work, is still very frequently used. It is now, however, customary in a measure to overlook Jost, because with advancing science more is known than he could know, and because his works were inferior in presentation and accuracy to those of his successor, Heinrich Graetz. In studying Jost and his relation to the progress of Jewish knowledge, we must judge him not by what we now know, but by the position he held among his contemporaries, and by the influence his work had upon them. Jost's work came at the proper moment and fulfilled the need of its time. When compared with his peers, he may not have been a genius: nor may he have been able to make their discoveries. In the light of his time, he was a man of extraordinary erudition and of great talent and resolution. As a pioneer, his attempts must be applauded; and his works must be classed among the important and epoch-making volumes of his century.

## CHAPTER X

### HEINRICH GRAETZ

OF all Jost's successors, the only historian of the Jews who has entirely supplanted him is Heinrich Graetz. Graetz was born October 31, 1817, at Xions, Posen, and died September 17, 1891, at Munich. As a child he gave no signs of his future distinction, but seems to have impressed most people as being dull and stupid. His early instruction he received at the Heder or Hebrew school, in Zerkov, whither his parents had moved shortly after his birth; then at Wollstein; and finally at Oldenburg, to which place he went hoping to receive a scientific training in the Talmud from Samson Raphael Hirsch. In 1840 he attended the University of Berlin, and in 1845 was graduated from the University of Jena with the degree of doctor of philosophy, his dissertation being "De auctoritate et vi quam

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliographisches Handwörterbuch*, p. xxxii.

gnosis in Judaismus habuerit" (published in 1846 under the title, "Gnosticismus und Judenthum").

After his graduation Graetz met with many disappointments. As a preacher, he was an utter failure; and as a teacher, he changed his positions frequently without improving his condition. At the opening of the Breslau seminary in 1854 he was appointed a member of the staff of instructors, and in 1870 was made professor in the University of Breslau.

Graetz first attracted attention by a series of articles published in Fürst's "Orient," 1844-45, among which a criticism of Geiger's "Lehrbuch zur Sprache der Mischna" deserves special notice; for it was Graetz's first attack on the Reform of Geiger. By this article, the author showed clearly his intention of championing that branch of the historical school headed by Zacharias Frankel. Graetz's doctor's dissertation and his contributions to Frankel's "Zeitschrift"<sup>1</sup> and "Monatsschrift"<sup>2</sup> were favorably received. His greatest work is his "Geschichte der Juden."<sup>3</sup> The first volume to appear was the fourth of the series, viz., "Vom Untergang des jüdischen Staates bis zum Abschluss des Talmud" (1853). This together with volume iii. (the second part to be published), "Geschichte der Juden von dem Tode Juda Maccabis bis zum Untergang des jüdischen Staates" (1856), commanded immediate approval and established Graetz's reputation. These volumes are scholarly, and give evidence of painstaking original research. They were the most carefully elaborated parts of the history, and shed much light upon a period of which comparatively little was known.

The remainder of the History, vols. v. to xi., which bring it down to the present day, is not so good; for it was written hurriedly, perhaps because Graetz feared some one might appear in the field before him and wrest from him the laurels for which he had so long been toiling. The last parts published were vols. i. and ii. (1874-76), which treat of Bible history. Before these two volumes were written, the author made a journey to the Holy Land, to be the better able to

<sup>1</sup> *Die Septuaginta im Talmud* (1845) ii. 429, and *Construction der jüdischen Geschichte* (1846), iii. 81, 121, 361, 413.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary sketches of his history, *Jüdische geschichtliche Studien*, i. 112, 156, 192, 307.

<sup>3</sup> Eleven volumes, 1853-76. Graetz published a popular abridged edition in three volumes, *Volksthümliche Geschichte*, 1888.

give correct coloring to his work. In the second and third editions of the individual volumes, Graetz has tried to include material published while he was working, without, however, materially changing the text.

Graetz had the ability—characteristic of the entire critical school—to collect vast material, and to master and arrange the same. A Jew himself, he could understand the conditions of his people in the past, could sympathize with them in their suffering, and rejoice in their well-being. Brought up in the Jewish tradition, he could, like Jost, make use of that tradition to the full extent. But he had one characteristic which Jost lacked—an imaginative temperament.

His task was rendered less difficult than Jost's had been; for there was more material upon which to build. Before the middle of the nineteenth century, scholars had published treatises on Jewish history; and many epoch-making volumes had appeared before Graetz began his task. Due credit must be given him for the original and new material he presented. But he has to a large extent made use of the works of others, which were not always primary sources. By accepting some of their views without close examination he has incorporated errors into his history. This is even true of the best of his volumes.<sup>1</sup>

When compared with Jost's histories, Graetz's work presents many superior qualities. First, Graetz had a better method and a better control of his material. Being more of a philosopher than Jost, Graetz joined his narratives more closely with a clearer study of cause and effect, thereby producing a more united and accurate whole. As has already been suggested, Graetz was of a more poetic temperament and gave to his work the coloring of a productive imagination. Jost is correct in saying:<sup>2</sup> "Graetz began a comprehensive history with surprising imagination. But this productive imagination has often led him astray." His desire to make history has at times caused him to overvalue things. For this reason his history is unequal in parts. In some accounts the work is very good; in others he has gone too much into detail, so that some parts, like the Reuchlin and Pfefferkorn contest, are unnecessarily drawn out.

Graetz's subjective treatment of the men he described led him to

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xvi. 291.

<sup>2</sup> Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums*, iii. 364.



make errors which Jost's objectiveness would hardly have committed. Graetz is either for or against the leaders of any movement. When dealing with those with whom his views are not in sympathy, and of whose theories and actions he disapproves, his remarks become personal. This is especially true of the eleventh volume, which treats of the Reformed Judaism in Germany. This volume is not a critical study of men and events, but an abuse of historical data. Criticism has given way to partisan feeling, which has so controlled the author that his judgments are not just.<sup>1</sup> It is a pity that a man of Graetz's ability, who could read character as probably few others could, should have misused that gift and have become biased in his criticism. Had he been less subjective in this volume, he would have rid himself of his antipathies. It might have been greatly to the advantage of Graetz's reputation had he never published the eleventh volume.

If we except his last volume and the first two, which treat of Bible history but present no new material, and are, perhaps, the weakest part of the History, the remaining eight contain critical analyses—stamped, it is true, by the author's personality, but scientific and thoroughly honest. A feature of the History that tends to make it very pleasant reading is its arrangement. The narrative is not interrupted by polemics or lengthy and scientific disquisitions in defense of the author's theories, or in rebuttal of those held by others. By relegating all such discussion to the notes, the author has served the purpose both of the student and of the general reader.

Besides being a historian, Graetz was an exegete. His Biblical criticisms are to be found in the first two volumes of his History, begun in 1871;<sup>2</sup> in a translation of and a commentary on Ecclesiastes and The Song of Songs (1871); in a translation of the Psalms (1881); and in a "Kritischer Commentar zu dem Psalmen nebst Text und Uebersetzungen" (1882-83), as well as in some minor contributions to the "Monatsschrift," of which he was editor from 1869 to 1887. Of these exegetical works, the commentary on the Psalms is the best. Although not a thorough Greek scholar, Graetz has made use of the Septuagint in his emendations. As an exegete he was not successful; for he was too fanciful and "permitted his zeal to run

<sup>1</sup> Cf. EMANUEL SCHREIBER's *Graetz's Geschichtsbauerei*, Berlin, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that Graetz left these two volumes to the last in order not to incur the displeasure of the head of the Breslau seminary, and that the journey to Palestine was merely a pretext to conceal his real motive.

away with him until he had lost the solid ground from under his feet. His acumen displayed and dissipated itself chiefly in the blinding pyrotechnics of rocket-like emendations."<sup>1</sup>

Graetz will be remembered only for his historical studies. His History has been translated into French, English, and especially into Hebrew. In recognition of his services to the science of Judaism, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the "Graetz Jubelschrift" was published (Berlin, 1887). Excepting the first two and the last volumes, his History remains a valuable contribution to Jewish studies; and, with a few changes and additions which the advance of science may render necessary, it will be the standard work for several decades to come.

## CHAPTER XI

### MORITZ STEINSCHNEIDER

THE last scholar to engage our attention, and who, after Zunz, has done more than any other scholar in Germany to promote the science of Judaism and to stimulate investigation, is Moritz Steinschneider. This "grand old man" of the school of modern Jewish critics, born in the second decade of the nineteenth century, still lives, and writes with unabated vigor. He is one of the marvels of the age, an example of intellectual fecundity and physical vitality. The mere manual labor of writing what has come from his pen would more than occupy the time of most men. But to copiousness of production is added rare scholarship and a high degree of originality. There is no greater living authority on Hebraica.

The biography of this great scholar is to be found in his books; for his interests are centered in them. They are his companions, and they occupy his time to the exclusion of all else. So wrapped up is he in them that he is indifferent to all honors that may be given him. He has taken comparatively no part in politics; he has ministered to no congregation. He has become known entirely through his works. By his zeal and earnestness he has given to his contemporaries and to future generations volumes in which the achievements of his people are recorded in plain but fitting and forcible language.

<sup>1</sup> PHILIPP BLOCH, *Memoir of H. Graetz*, in the English edition of Graetz's *History of the Jews*, vol. vi. 75, Philadelphia, 1898.

and for which his name will ever be prominent in the history of Jewish literature.

Moritz Steinschneider, Hebraist, Arabist, and Aramaic scholar, was born March 30, 1816, in Prossnitz, Moravia. His father, an eminent Talmudist, realizing that the one-sided view of most Jewish scholars was due to their peculiarly Jewish training, took great care that his son Moritz should not suffer in this respect, and therefore gave him a most liberal and sound education.

At the age of six Steinschneider was sent to a Christian school in Prossnitz, so that his surroundings should not be entirely Jewish and that he might receive impressions from the outer world, of which so many Jews were, ignorant or in which they were initiated too late to prevent them from being biased. In this respect, Steinschneider started in life with more advantages than many of his colleagues, such as Krochmal and Rapoport, who had no school training whatsoever. He was thus enabled to cultivate a broader and more tolerant judgment.

His Hebrew studies were not neglected, and were indeed pursued with the view of preparing him for the ministry. At the age of thirteen he attended the yeshibah or Jewish college of his native city; in 1832 he went to Nikolsburg in order to be with his early instructor; and, later, he continued his studies at Prague and Vienna. In 1835, together with some young enthusiasts, he formed the bold and very immature plan of founding a Jewish state to which the Jews of Germany and Austria should go. Though the project was a failure, it was not entirely without results; and it may be regarded as in a measure the precursor of the Zionist movement of the present day. After the society disbanded, the idea was fostered in England, whither some of Steinschneider's associates went, hoping to receive among a liberal people a more ready response to their exhortations. Steinschneider himself nurtured his scheme for some years, but, finally recognizing its futility, directed all his efforts to the regeneration of Israel by promoting the intellectual renaissance that had broken forth under the guidance of men like Zunz and Rapoport.

In Vienna, where he had hoped to find available all resources necessary for the continuation of his special studies, the civil disabilities placed upon Jews hampered him in his work. The Government, possibly informed of the design of the expatriation of the Aus-

trian Jews, and considering it advisable to be rid of him as soon as possible, ordered Steinschneider to leave Vienna as soon as he had completed his course of study. Despite the many inconveniences he had to undergo in Vienna, and notwithstanding the refusal of the Government to grant him special privileges, such as making extracts from the catalogue of the Hebrew collection in the Imperial Library,<sup>1</sup> Steinschneider endeavored to make rapid strides in acquiring knowledge. Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac were his chosen studies, and to these he directed all his energy. Seeing that there was no chance of advancement in Vienna, he set out for Berlin, where he hoped to have more liberty to work. He, however, got no further than Leipsic; for, not having a pass, he was compelled to remain there. This enforced stay in Leipsic was not without its benefits; for it brought the energetic student in touch with the University of Leipsic, and especially with the well-known Arabic scholar, Fleischer.

Having obtained his doctorate from the University and been furnished with a pass, he resumed his journey to Berlin in 1839. Here he met Leopold Zunz, and readily recognized him as his master. Zunz's influence on Steinschneider must have been considerable; for the latter acknowledges that the written and personal communications and the works of Zunz "traced out the pathway leading to the science of Judaism." His stay with Zunz, however, was short; for, in 1842 he went to Prague, where he had accepted a position as teacher in a girls' school. He returned to Berlin in 1845; and there, with occasional travels to various parts of Europe in search of manuscripts, he has made his home.

From 1869 to 1890 Steinschneider was director of the Jewish school for girls in Berlin. In 1872 he was offered a chair at the "Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums," and in 1877 he was invited to the Jewish seminary at Budapest, both of which offers he declined. Despite the importance of his work, the Prussian Government was slow to recognize his greatness, and only grudgingly and sparingly bestowed honors upon him. For many years he has been head of the Hebrew department of the Königlische Bibliothek, and in 1893 was presented by the Government with the title of professor.

Columbia University must take a certain amount of personal

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Копут, in *American Hebrew*, 1900, April 13, p. 699.

interest in him; for on the seventieth anniversary of his birthday the University conferred upon him the honorary degree of doctor of laws.

Since 1838 Steinschneider has written incessantly in Hebrew, German, French, Italian, and Latin. His works have been so numerous that the mere enumeration of them would fill many pages.<sup>1</sup> He has written upon almost every phase of Jewish literature, and has made incursions into Arabic and Syriac as well. He has contributed to many encyclopedias and to numerous periodicals dedicated to Orientalia, mathematics, and medicine. His articles treat of poetry, fables, homilies, Talmud, Haggadah, philosophy, metaphysics, Cabala, history, chronology, geography, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, linguistics, "Volksliteratur," and chess. He has been translator, editor, and book reviewer. At one time he proposed to edit a Jewish encyclopedia, wrote letters in behalf of such an undertaking,<sup>2</sup> and with David Cassel even issued a prospectus of the proposed work. Though the need of such an encyclopedia has at all times been urgent, it has remained for American enterprise to bring such a work to a successful issue.

In reference to the sources the bibliographer has had at his service, the reader is referred to the introduction of Steinschneider's "Bibliographisches Handbuch," 1859, of his "Catalogus Librorum hebræorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana," 1857, and of Fürst's "Bibliotheca Judaica" vol. iii., "Vorwort." It should, however, be stated that Steinschneider's bibliographies have excelled and supplanted all the works of his predecessors, among the more recent of whom are Johann Christian Wolf, Dei Rossi, and Julius Fürst.

Steinschneider's reputation rests upon his bibliographical works and upon his studies in Jewish and Arabic literature and history. Many of his best articles, which are standard works on Jewish literature, are to be found scattered through the various encyclopedias and journals to which he contributed. Of these the most noteworthy is the article "Jüdische Literatur" in the "Allgemeine Encyclopädie

<sup>1</sup> Two lists have been made: one by Dr. A. BERLINER in his *Schriften des Dr. Moritz Steinschneider*, Berlin, 1886; and a more complete one, published by GEORGE A. KOHUT in the *Festschrift zum achtzigsten Geburtstag Moritz Steinschneider's*, Leipsic, 1896, which covers some twenty octavo pages of very fine print.

<sup>2</sup> Fürst's *Literaturblatt des Orients*, 1840, pp. 465-71, 491-4, 500-4; and *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, i., preface, p. xix., New York, 1901.

der Wissenschaften und Künste,"<sup>1</sup> edited by Ersch and Gruber. The difficulties that Steinschneider encountered in writing this article were numerous. The field had been only partially worked. Furthermore, as the article was intended for an encyclopedia, it had to be very concise, yet not obscure, and to be confined to mere outlines so as not to trespass upon detailed accounts the exposition of which had been assigned to other contributors. Though the article turned out to be much longer than originally planned,<sup>2</sup> the author has in no instance encroached on the domain of his collaborators. "Jüdische Literatur" was the first attempt to present a history of Jewish literature in which every phase of that literature should receive its proper share of attention. The method employed by the author is critical; his exposition is historical. Though much has been written on Jewish literature since its first appearance, though every encyclopedia contains some articles on the subject, Steinschneider's "Jüdische Literatur" still remains the authority.

The other great historico-literary and critical works that Steinschneider has produced are "Die hebräische Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher: ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des Mittelalters meist nach handschriftlichen Quellen," Berlin, 1893, and "Die arabischen Uebersetzungen aus den Griechischen," 1889-96.

One very remarkable feature of both works is that they were published long after the period in life at which most men retire from a literary career. Both works represent the toil of more than half a century. The sources were scattered all over Europe, in public and in private libraries. To get at these required years of travel and research; and even then much of the necessary material was beyond Steinschneider's reach. Happily, good fellowship was an inherent quality of this band of students, and each was ready at a moment's call to render his fellow laborer assistance and to furnish all the information

<sup>1</sup> Section 2, vol. xxvii. 357-359. This article has been translated into English by WILLIAM SPOTTISWOOD, under the title *Jewish Literature from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century; with an Introduction on Talmud and Midrash*, London, 1857. An index to the article was made by STEINSCHNEIDER and published at Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1893. A Hebrew translation was made by HIRSCH MALTAR, Warsaw, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> The English translation covers more than two hundred and fifty octavo pages, not including notes and indices.

that was needed. In this way the Northern Jewish scholars received information of manuscripts in the libraries of the South, and vice versa. As Zunz had received data from Luzzatto and from others in all parts of Europe, so also was Steinschneider assisted in his "Uebersetzungen" by the willing hands and brains of his peers. Both these contributions were prize essays submitted to the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, which fact of itself is a testimony to their great value. In 1880 the Académie offered a prize for the best essay on the theme, "Faire l'énumération compl. et systemat. des traductions hébraïques qui ont été faites au moyen-âge, d'ouvrage de philosophie et de sciences grecs, arabes, ou même latins,"<sup>1</sup> and in 1882 offered another prize on the subject, "Relever sur . . . le Fihrist toutes les traductions d'ouvrages en arabe; critiquer ces données bibliographiques d'après les documents imprimés et manuscrits."<sup>2</sup> In response Steinschneider wrote two separate dissertations in French, and later translated them into German. Of the two, "Die hebräische Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters" is the better known and more generally consulted. The other, "Die Arabischen Uebersetzungen," was never published separately, but was printed in three parts in various periodicals.<sup>3</sup> Of these two dissertations the "Hebräische Uebersetzungen" alone is of immediate interest for our present study of the work done in Jewish history and literature during the nineteenth century. The "Hebräische Uebersetzungen" treats of translations made by the Jews of the Middle Ages from Arabic, Greek, Latin, and, to a less extent, from modern languages.

Steinschneider claims that translations were made at a very early date, much earlier than most students are aware. It is true that the greatest activity of the Jewish translations occurred in the twelfth century. But long before that time, the desire was felt to become acquainted with thought expressed in a language unknown to most Jews. To this desire we owe translations from the Greek, a study of which was stimulated by contact with Greek thought through

<sup>1</sup> Kohn, Bibliography of Steinschneider's writings in *Festschrift*, 1896, p. xi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The introduction was published in the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 1889, vii. 51-85; chap. i. was published under the title *Philosophie*, *ibid.*, 1893, xii. 129-240; chap. ii. in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1896; chap. iii. *Medicine*, in Virchow's *Archiv*, 1891, cxxiv. 115-36; 268-96, 455-87.

Arabic sources. Translations were also made from the works of Arabs, of Jews who wrote in other languages than Hebrew, and of Christians, as well as from many anonymous compositions. Not only were religious treatises translated, but books on medicine, philosophy, fables, and astronomy were rendered from one language into another. No matter how low the political and social condition of the Jews may have been during the Middle Ages, their intellectual standing was always of a comparatively high degree.

The "Hebräische Uebersetzungen" is arranged according to the subject-matter with which the translations deal: philosophy, mathematics, medicine, etc. The author has been very careful to give detailed information in regard to biographical and bibliographical data, to the commentaries and supercommentaries made upon the translations. In 1,077 pages the author has traced, more clearly than it had ever been traced before, the part taken by the Jews in the development of culture in Europe and in the renaissance of learning. He has showed how the Jew has acted the part of mediator between Europe on the one hand, and Greek and Arabic thought on the other.

Though the "Jüdische Literatur" and the "Hebräische Uebersetzungen" are to be placed among the best of Steinschneider's works, his greatest achievements are his catalogues. He is *par excellence* the bibliographer of this school. To his exertions we owe catalogues of collections of Jewish books and manuscripts in some of the most important libraries of Europe and in many private collections. The most valuable of these are the "Catalogus Librorum hebræorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana," 1852-69; "Conspectus Codicum hebræorum Bibliothecæ Academiæ Lugduno-Batavæ," 1858; "Die Hebräischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München," 1875; 2d ed. 1895-96; "Catalog der hebräischen Handschriften in der Stadtbibliothek zu Hamburg und der sich anschliessenden in anderen Sprachen," 1878. Of these catalogues, that of the Bodleian Library is one of the greatest works that any Jewish scholar of the century has produced. It is a storehouse of information; dealing with those authors that have made Jewish literature, and treating of them in alphabetical order.

Steinschneider has also edited the "Hebräische Bibliographie" (1858-65, 1869-1881), a journal treating on Jewish literature in all its various branches.



The mere manual work required of the author in the production of Steinschneider's books, especially his catalogues, is almost incredible: the value of the works themselves to the student of Jewish history and literature cannot be overestimated. He has treated, briefly yet as exhaustively as his sources would permit, all Jewish authors; he has given their biographies, the editions of their works, and has shown the relative importance of each writer.

Most of Steinschneider's works were not written for a reading public, nor were they intended to be read continuously by the student. They are mainly reference books, veritable encyclopedias of Jewish literature and Jewish culture in general, indispensable alike for the student and the scholar.

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